



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Morecambe Offshore Windfarm / Morgan Offshore Wind
<b>File reference</b>	EN010121 / EN010136
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	31 August 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	Morgan Offshore Wind Limited Flotation Energy (Morecambe Offshore Windfarm)
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Update meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

#### ***General Project Update***

The objective of the meeting was for the Applicants to update on the current grid connection agreements and consenting strategies, including the Section 35 Direction request to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for the shared grid connection. The Applicant presented an overview of each of the projects.

#### ***Grid connection arrangements***

Both projects were included in the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR). Under this process, National Grid (NG) has conducted a [Holistic Network Design Review](#) (HNDR) to assess the options for connection between the transmission assets of the projects and the electrical grid. The HNDR concluded that both projects will have a single (co-ordinated) grid connection location at Penwortham in Lancashire. The Applicants emphasised that the coordination of the transmission assets is merely based on the cable corridors, with both developers having electrical separation of the projects.

The Applicants shared a diagram emphasising the separation between the infrastructure included in the Generation Assets and the infrastructure included under the Transmission Assets. The Applicants referred to a “common cable corridor” as the point in which two or more electric export cables come together to run in parallel and form a single corridor (physically and electrically separated). Both Applicants are working together with the aim to deliver a shared onshore substation location where each developer will have physical and electrical separation of its respective substation assets. From each onshore substation, a 400 kV connection to the electrical grid at Penwortham is to be confirmed by NG.



The Inspectorate queried whether the offshore substation platforms for both projects would fall under the Development Consent Order (DCO) for the generation assets or the DCO for the transmission assets. The Applicants responded that it is not yet confirmed. However, the Applicant's intention is to include them within both the DCOs for the generation assets and the DCO for the transmission assets with each reflecting the maximum number of substations for each of the projects, therefore, ensuring that no more than the maximum number of substations are being built. The Applicants highlighted that this process was similar to the offshore substation platforms being included in both the deemed marine licence (DML) and the DCOs.

## ***Consenting strategy for coordinated grid connection***

The Applicants confirmed that they were satisfied with the HNDR conclusions and was putting together coordination agreements between developers. After several workshops to discuss a coordinated transmission DCO (i.e. a DCO that includes the transmission assets for both projects) and further feedback from stakeholders, some of the advantages of this approach would include:

- A formal structure for the projects to collaborate and align on design, assessment and mitigation approach
- Allows for the integrated consideration of cumulative impacts
- Simpler for stakeholders to understand, minimising the risk of fatigue and confusion

The Inspectorate enquired whether it would be feasible to connect the cable corridors prior to the Morecambe offshore substation. The Applicants responded that previous HNDR designs included Morgan's cable corridor entering into the Morecambe offshore windfarm area to link into a common offshore substation and then both sets of cables using the same cable corridor to shore. After discussing it with NG, it was concluded that there were no real benefits in this model and instead the intention is for Morecambe cables to integrate into the Morgan cable corridor as it passes the Morecambe site thereafter using a shared corridor to shore.

## ***Request for Direction under s35 of the Planning Act 2008***

The Applicant explained that as part of the project, the transmission assets works do not form part of the National Significant Infrastructure projects (NSIP) regime. Consultation with BEIS has been ongoing for the past couple of months and an application was submitted by the Applicants on 23 August 2022 to BEIS to exercise its power under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 and direct that the transmission assets for both projects be treated as development for which development consent is required. BEIS has requested some further information to accompany the application and it is hoped that a decision on the application will be made at the end of September 2022. Additionally, the Applicant will be contacting all local planning authorities (LPAs) affected by the transmission assets proposal. These would be:

- Blackpool Council
- Fylde Borough Council
- Preston City Council
- South Ribble Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council

The Applicant shared a map of the scoping boundary which accommodates the area necessary to locate the proposed offshore and onshore transmission asset infrastructure for both projects. The



majority of the onshore cabling will sit within Fylde Borough Council. The Applicant explained that onshore substation locations are being considered in South Ribble and Fylde Borough Councils.

## ***Indicative timelines for the projects***

The Applicant shared a timeline of the DCO application submission with the Inspectorate. The intention is for the DCO application for the coordinated transmission assets to run slightly behind the DCO applications for the generation assets of both the Morgan and Morecambe windfarms. Morecambe and Morgan have submitted their scoping reports for their generation assets on [23 June 2022](#) and [14 June 2022](#) respectively. The Applicants advised that the aim is to submit the transmission assets scoping report in Q3 of 2022 should BEIS approve a Section 35 Direction. The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant of the requirement to submit the geographic information system (GIS) shapefile at least 10 working days prior to submitting a scoping request as indicated in [Advice Note Seven](#). The Inspectorate suggested to the Applicant to give margin between the publication of the scoping opinion for the transmission assets and the start of the non-statutory consultation, as this document will include valuable information that could feed into the consultation period.

The Applicants remarked on the need for a meeting to discuss how to approach the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) including presentation of application documents. The Inspectorate pointed out that this should be scheduled outside of the Inspectorate's statutory scoping timeframe. The Applicants emphasised that having a post scoping meeting would help answer queries, especially regarding cumulative effects. The Inspectorate suggested that the Applicant could set out in its Scoping Report the proposed approach to cumulative effects, including an explanation of what is not yet decided, which should enable consultation bodies to provide targeted comments for consideration as the scoping opinion is prepared.

Consultation options are being considered at the moment. Both projects are aiming to start their respective non statutory consultation in Q3 2022. Based on the conclusions of the published scoping opinions for the generation assets of both [Morecambe](#) and [Morgan](#), the Applicants are aware of the considerations for cumulative effects. Collaboration on shipping and navigation studies for the generation assets has been ongoing between the developers and the transmission assets will consider the effects of all three projects combined.

The Applicants informed the Inspectorate that the Morgan and Morecambe generation assets DCO applications will both be submitted in Q1 2024, with the transmission assets DCO application anticipated to be submitted in Q3 2024. The Inspectorate noted the timing of the Examination period for the generation assets DCOs and questioned whether it would have an impact on the course of the transmission asset DCO submission. The Applicants responded that they expected the transmission assets. Examination will begin when the other two generation asset DCOs are in the recommendation stage. The Applicants also made emphasis on the fact that the draft National Policy Statements (NPS) envisaged generation and transmission consents being sought separately.

## ***Next steps***

The Applicants queried setting up a NSIP page for the new transmission asset project. The Inspectorate responded that once a confirmation of a Section 35 Direction is received, the Case Team can set up a project page. The Inspectorate also advised that the Applicants may wish to review the current project pages and provide the Inspectorate with any updates that may be helpful. **Post meeting note:** A project information request has been sent to the Applicant.



The Applicant asked who the main point of contact should be. The Inspectorate stated that the Case Managers and project mailboxes for each project should be the first point of contact.