

Meeting note

Project name	Mona Offshore Wind Farm
File reference	EN010137
Status	Draft
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	10 January 2023
Meeting with	BP/EnBW
Venue	MS 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.

Project Description

A joint meeting was held for Mona and Morgan Offshore wind farms, which are two separate projects in the Irish Sea. Morgan Offshore Wind Farm is located in North-Western English waters, and Mona is located primarily in Welsh waters, with slight overlap of English waters. The Offshore Wind Leasing Round 4 Agreements for Lease signing concluded in January 2023. The Crown Estate has confirmed the Mona Offshore Wind Farm (Proposed Development) was successful in this round. The Proposed Development is expected to have a transmission capacity of up to 1.5GW, and when combined provide a total capacity of 3 GW, which the Applicant stated would be enough to power 3.4 million UK households.

Consenting Strategy

The Proposed Development will seek a Development Consent Order (DCO) that will cover both the generation assets and the offshore elements. The Proposed Development is located in both English and Welsh territories. The Applicant confirmed that it would seek to deem a marine licence as part of the DCO for:

- (i) licensable activities which are wholly within the Welsh Offshore Waters (beyond 12nm from the coast)
- (ii) licensable activities located within English waters.

A separate marine licence will be sought from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) for licensable activities within 12nm of the Welsh coast.

The Applicant is working closely with NRW to produce a Marine Licence Principles document to clearly present how the different marine licences will interface with each other, an explanatory note will explain how these different approaches fit together in the DCO. The Inspectorate advised that including the agreement with NRW within the Marine Licence Principles document would be beneficial to the application.

Consultation Update

The Applicant discussed its consultation activity to date and its plan for further engagement. The Applicant has conducted two rounds of non-statutory consultation, alongside further general consultation for the onshore infrastructure. This ran from June to August 2022, with onshore non-statutory consultation in September to November 2022. The Applicant has also established expert working groups, monthly stakeholder sessions with statutory nature conservation bodies and consultation with fisheries. The Applicant confirmed that consultation on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) will be conducted between April and May 2023. It was explained how there is currently a small overlap with English waters. The Applicant confirmed that Morecambe, Morgan and Mona Offshore wind farms will be consulting simultaneously.

Survey and Assessment Updates

The Applicant undertook geophysical surveys in 2022, focussing on mixed ground conditions and further studies will be required in 2023. It was confirmed that phase one ecology surveys have been completed and the onshore studies will continue throughout 2023. These data sets will be reflected in the PEIR. Overwintering surveys are also in progress. The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant had considered the impact of bird flu, to which it confirmed that engagement is ongoing with Natural Resources Wales and further discussions will include such issues.

The Applicant has also conducted numerous surveys in regard to Shipping and Navigation in the surrounding waters. Extensive consultation has been undertaken with key navigation stakeholders, this included bridge simulations and a Navigation Risk Assessment (NRA). The NRA has been used to establish the cumulative effects of the R4 projects at PEIR, the Applicant has made commitments towards boundary revisions for the Mona development, this will be discussed in the PEIR consultation.

Preliminary Environmental Information

The Applicant discussed which documents will be included in the publication of the PEIR, due in late March 2023. The Applicant will submit a draft Environmental Statement, a draft Development Consent Order, preliminary Works Plans, a draft Deemed Marine Licence and a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP). The Inspectorate queried if a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment would also be included in the PEIR. The Applicant confirmed that a screening of the Likely Significant Effects would be included.

Indicative Timelines

Q1 2023: PEIR Submission

Q1 2024: DCO Submission

AOB

The Applicant confirmed it intends to submit its DCO application in Q1 2024. It sought advice from the Inspectorate on whether to submit the application in parallel with Morgan Offshore Wind Farm, or with a time lag. The Inspectorate confirmed that ultimately this is a matter for the Applicant to decide. However, this is clearly a matter that should be given attention and would benefit from further discussion at subsequent meetings.

Next Steps

In view of the number of NSIPs within the same area, on very similar timescales, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant that it may be beneficial to hold more regular meetings, the frequency of which would be considered and agreed.