



Meeting note

Project name	Dogger Bank D Wind Farm
File reference	EN010144
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	09 January 2024
Meeting with	Gatrogen Developments 2 Limited (“The Applicant”)
Venue	Microsoft 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 Update

The Applicant recently undertook some non-statutory consultation, running between 26 September 2023 and 7 November 2023, focusing on two proposed locations for the hydrogen infrastructure. During this consultation, details regarding both offshore and onshore elements of the project were presented to local communities. From the feedback, there was no clear preference towards either of the proposed locations for hydrogen infrastructure, at either Aldbrough or Saltend. During the scoping stage, the sites for the hydrogen location were much broader but these are now more refined. Both feedback and technical studies will contribute to the final decision which is expected to be confirmed prior to producing the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

Main issues raised within the feedback focused on construction, traffic, environmental and noise impacts. 95 responses were received from the leaflets, posters and letters sent out alongside online outreach. Next steps will include finalising a decision on the Hydrogen Site and preparing a summary of consultation responses which will be shared at the end of January 2024.

Post meeting note: Following confirmation of an onshore grid connection in the East Riding of Yorkshire, the option to direct the wind energy produced by Dogger Bank D as publicly consulted on, has been retired from the project.

The Applicant has completed 9 of 10 Expert Topic Group (ETG) meetings in the first round of the Evidence Plan Process. It is aiming to progress these meetings and plan future dates around the availability of key updates.



The project is one of a number of projects included within the Crown Estate's (TCE) Plan-Level Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) which was announced in November 2023. As the Applicant's project-level HRA is already ongoing, the plan-level and project-level HRAs will be running in parallel and the Applicant plans to engage in both HRAs concurrently, working to maintain continuous collaboration and communication with TCE. An initial meeting with TCE was held in December 2023 to gain more information on the plan-level HRA and share further details on the Applicant's own project. The Applicant explained that based on the current information, the plan-level HRA is likely to be completed prior to submission of the DCO application.

The dates previously allocated for the PEIR and application submission are likely to be pushed back, as the Applicant continues to explore alternative connection options, in line with the Offshore Transmission Network Review. The Inspectorate asked for confirmation of any amendments to key dates as early as possible to ensure effective resource allocation and advised on the timescales required for draft document reviews (6-8 weeks), if the service is requested. The DCO application is currently expected to be submitted in March 2025.

The Applicant outlined a change in design for the grid connection, explaining that a radial connection design proposal has been developed. The Applicant queried how this change should be managed with regards to EIA scoping. Advice from the Inspectorate is as follows:

Although requesting a scoping opinion of the Secretary of State is not a statutory requirement, the EIA Regulations require the ES to be based on the most recent scoping opinion adopted (Regulation 14(3) of the EIA Regulations). The Regulation specifies 'So far as the proposed development remains materially the same as the proposed development which was subject to that opinion'.

The adopted Scoping Opinion (dated 1 June 2023) is based on the information available in the Scoping Report (dated 21 April 2023) at that point in time and there is no mechanism by which it can be amended/ updated by the Inspectorate to account for the radial connection design proposal.

The Applicant could submit a new scoping request under Regulation 10(1) of the EIA Regulations to the Secretary of State, which would need to include a description of the updated Proposed Development and an explanation of the likely significant effects of the development in its entirety. This would need to be accompanied by a new GIS Shapefile and notification under Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations (the Applicant would then be provided with a new list of the consultation bodies notified under Regulation 11(1)(a)), as required by Regulation 11(1)(b)). The Inspectorate would notify and consult the consultation bodies again (including any additional bodies identified) and produce a new Scoping Opinion for the entire Proposed Development including the radial connection design proposal.

Alternatively, the Applicant could seek to define the scope of the assessment of effects arising from the radial connection through engagement with relevant consultation bodies, including as part of the Evidence Plan Process. The Applicant should take care to ensure that aspects/ matters included in the EIA Regulations and particularly Schedule 4 (where relevant) are appropriately addressed. In order to demonstrate that aspects/ matters have



been appropriately addressed, the ES (and PEIR, where possible) should explain the reasoning for scoping them in/ out and justify the approach taken. The Applicant should also consider whether it needs to identify any additional consultation bodies in light of the change to the red line boundary presented at scoping.

Having regard to the advice above it is a matter for the Applicant to determine whether or not to submit a new scoping request.

HRA derogations

The Applicant is progressing conversations around derogations and compensatory measures, with an aim to identify the compensatory measures as early as possible during the pre-application stage. The Inspectorate advised that the HRA Report should describe the measures and how their delivery would be secured, including as much detail as possible in this regard. The Inspectorate's [Advice Note 10: HRA relevant to NSIPs](#) provides further advice regarding compensatory measures.

The Applicant noted that a number of projects in the area have recently proposed compensatory measures which the competent authority has been satisfied with, which the Applicant will use to help define its own compensatory measures. It will be working with local councils to gain more information on such compensatory measures.

It was noted that TCE are developing Round 4 Strategic Compensation Plans for Flamborough and Filey Coast Special Protected Area and Dogger Bank Special Area of Conservation. The Applicant will review how this progresses.

The Applicant enquired about involvement from the Inspectorate in the HRA-related Expert Topic Groups (ETGs) for the application. The Inspectorate confirmed that at the current time, it is able to attend the Steering Group meetings but will not attend the ETG meetings. Attendance at multiparty meetings including ETG meetings by the Inspectorate is one of the measures being trialled by projects included in the Early Adopters programme.

EIA Regulation 32 Transboundary Screening

The Applicant asked about the timescales for the transboundary screening and notification exercise undertaken by the Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State). The Inspectorate advised that it was in the process of drafting the transboundary screening and would shortly be issuing a query to the Applicant regarding the potential for significant effects on offshore ornithology in Ireland. **Post meeting note:** The Applicant has responded to the Inspectorate's query and the Inspectorate has now undertaken the transboundary screening and notification exercise, with eight European Economic Area (EEA) States notified (Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany and Iceland).

The Applicant noted that at this stage, it has undertaken limited consultation with relevant parties regarding potential transboundary impacts. The Inspectorate referred the Applicant to [Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts and Process](#) (Section 4.2 refers), which states that where the Inspectorate is of the view that the proposed NSIP is likely to have a significant effect on the environment in an EEA State(s), the Applicant may wish to engage with certain appropriate bodies within those EEA State(s) and/ or other relevant states.



Any engagement/ consultation may form part of the Applicant's statutory or non-statutory consultation under the pre-application stage of the DCO process and should be evidenced in the consultation report submitted with the DCO application.

Planning changes and Implications

Questions were raised from the Applicant regarding the Early Adopters Programme (EAP), focusing on relevant updates and feedback from other projects on the scheme. The Inspectorate highlighted the value of design principle documents, directing the Applicant towards the published advice on the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm project page.