



Meeting note

Project name	Dogger Bank D Wind Farm
File reference	EN010144
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	21 August 2024
Meeting with	Doggerbank Offshore Wind Farm Project 4 Projco 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 provided the Inspectorate with an update on the progress of the application, including information on the development of Environmental Documentation and plans for future consultation. In response to a query from the Inspectorate about whether the current optionality is intended to be removed from the scheme before submission, the Applicant provided confirmation that it intends to remove boundary optionality before the application is submitted for examination, and stated that an Impacts Register and a Commitment Register will support its approach to the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).

Scoping Opinion (SO) adopted by the Secretary of State on 2 August 2024

The Applicant stated that the next steps for the scoping process will be to review the SO in detail and discuss with key stakeholders. The Applicant highlighted comments from Natural England regarding provision of advice on the compensation requirements, a matter which the Applicant is continuing to make effort to discuss and agree with Natural England. The Inspectorate confirmed that Applicants and the relevant Appropriate Nature Conservation Body are strongly encouraged to engage as early as possible during the pre-application stage to identify the compensatory measures. The Applicant will keep the Planning Inspectorate updated on this matter.

The Applicant also noted comments on sediment heating which were made by the Inspectorate, Natural England and the Marine Management Organisation in the SO and stated that it would address these through the Evidence Plan Process.

Stakeholder Engagement Update

The Applicant gave a summary on the stakeholder engagement to date. The Applicant then summarised the feedback on Evidence Plan Process challenges and provided details on Expert Topic Groups and the upcoming meeting times for each one. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that it will be useful to feed information from these groups into the Consultation Report in due course.

The Applicant noted the upcoming non-statutory consultation which is due to commence on 10th September running until 22nd October. A number of in person consultation events will be held locally and added that online webinars and recorded presentations were components of the non-statutory consultation.

Other topics for discussion

Following a query from the Applicant on how coordination should be approached and reflected in the Application, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant on coordination with other major infrastructure projects, stating that the Five Estuaries and North Falls offshore wind farms are examples of projects which seek connection options. The Inspectorate confirmed that Five Estuaries was in the pre-examination stage and North Falls was in acceptance, so had not been accepted for examination. **Post Meeting Note:** North Falls was accepted for examination on 22 August 2024. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to follow each project's progress, including how Examining Authorities are examining the optionality.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant on good design, stating the importance of demonstrating the design journey and how feedback from stakeholder engagement has been incorporated into the design, addressing National Policy Statement EN-1 and the Design Principles for National Infrastructure, which has been prepared by the National Infrastructure Commission. The Inspectorate also advised the Applicant to view the Design Approach Document for the Outer Dowsing Offshore Wind Farm application as a trial of the Early Adopter Programme, whilst caveating that the project is undetermined and as such the Inspectorate cannot comment on the quality of the document. Feedback from earlier versions of the document, provided at the pre-application stage, are included in the [Planning Inspectorate Review of Early Adopters Programme Products document](#) for that case. The Inspectorate added that a design advice page should be published on its website in the next few months, and that a Design Approach Document is a mandatory component of the fast-track tier of the new pre-application service.

AOB

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that it will reconsider the potential for transboundary effects under Regulation 32 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, further to the adoption of the new SO. The first transboundary screening would stay on the project webpage and a re-screening would be undertaken and published in approximately late September 2024. Any European Economic Area (EEA) States identified as having a likely significant effect on their environment, will be notified of the Proposed Development under Regulation 32 of the EIA Regulations (with the exception of those who previously confirmed their intention to

participate in the EIA procedure, who will be consulted following acceptance of any DCO application).

The Inspectorate gave the Applicant further advice on the pre-application tier service and requested that the Applicant attempt to identify dates of any key 'touch points' with the Inspectorate, for example meeting dates or document reviews, to provide the best opportunity to ensure resource could be planned effectively. The Inspectorate confirmed that it will be writing to all Applicants by the end of August to confirm tiers and that this project, as requested by the Applicant, would follow the enhanced service. However, at this stage, the Inspectorate could not confirm that the project is suitable to follow the fast-track route on the basis of the information provided to date; further discussions in relation to this matter will take place in due course and the Applicant was directed to the [associated government guidance](#) and the Inspectorate's [pre-application prospectus](#). The Inspectorate advised that if the Applicant did subsequently wish to pursue the formal fast track route that it should inform relevant stakeholders of this intention at the earliest opportunity, as outlined in the associated guidance. Irrespective of whether the formal Fast Track route was followed, the Inspectorate advised that there is opportunity to deal with applications quicker than statutory timeframes, for example examination and reporting periods, if the submitted application is of sufficient quality and there are few, if any, change requests or outstanding issues to be resolved.

The Applicant asked the Inspectorate about updated guidance, to which the Inspectorate replied that all the relevant guidance and advice notes have now been published on its website and that it is important the Applicant addresses the guidance when preparing its application for submission.

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant whether there have been any updates on the programmes for National Grid's Town and Country Planning Act 1990 application for the Birkhill Wood substation; the Applicant confirmed that it understands the application is likely to be submitted to the Local Authority during the Autumn 2024.

The Inspectorate asked the Applicant about engagement with the East Riding of Yorkshire Council. The Applicant confirmed that although engagement had been challenging due to the lack of resources at the Council, a Planning Performance Agreement has recently been signed with the host authority.

The Inspectorate and the Applicant agreed to hold the next update meeting after the close of non-statutory consultation (which runs between 10 September 2024 and 22 October 2024) in November 2024.