

Meeting note

Project name	Continental Link Multi-Purpose Interconnector
File reference	EN20025
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	25 April 2022
Meeting with	National Grid Ventures
Venue	Virtual Meeting
Meeting objectives	Inception 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.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months if requested by the Applicant, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Introduction to the project

National Grid Ventures (NGV) introduced the project which is a multi-purpose interconnector (MPI) from Yorkshire to Scandinavia with the ability to link to offshore wind farms. MPIs help reduce the onshore and cable infrastructure associated with traditional onshore grid connections from offshore renewable energy sources.

The project will provide a 1.8 GW connection to the British National Transmission System, which can facilitate up to 3.6 GW of offshore wind connection by virtue of 2 cables to separate demand centres. NGV are currently undertaking a desktop study of potential converter station sites and terrestrial route corridor options

NGV explained that MPI do not fall within the PA2008. However, in looking to integrate with offshore wind through an MPI, recognised the efficiencies that could be realised through permitting through the same regime and therefore obtained a s35 Direction from the Secretary of State. The Inspectorate noted that, as part of the Secretary of States' direction decision, it was stated that NGV could clarify with the Secretary of State (in advance of the submission of the application), which parts of the project is to be treated as development for which development consent is required and which parts are associated development.

NGV observed that the offshore wind industry is looking to secure onshore grid connections as soon as possible in order to deliver 40GW by 2030 (since increased to 50GW by 2030 in the British Energy Security Strategy) and that this will require greater coordination.

NGV is looking at all aspects of co-ordination and integration, inclusive of construction practices, engagement, supply chain, and the potential integration of project activity during development/construction/operation if possible in order to help reduce consultation fatigue and construction impacts on local communities and interested parties whilst maximising community coordination and biodiversity net gain/mitigation.

There was some discussion regarding the future Projects of Mutual Interest process regarding the status of such projects post UK withdrawal from the EU.

Programme

NGV currently working on a soft public launch and are working with Hornsea 4 and other active projects in the geography, inclusive of engagement with East Riding Council

Environmental Impact Assessment scoping is proposed in Q2 2023. A seabed survey will follow scoping.

The Inspectorate asked what the scoping report might contain, NGV are currently looking at options with offshore wind promoters and liaising with BEIS in respect of the Offshore Transmission Network Review OTNR.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- Next meeting in September 2022