



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Morgan & Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets
<b>File reference</b>	EN020028
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	26 June 2023
<b>Meeting with</b>	Flotation Energy and EnBW/bp
<b>Venue</b>	MS Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project 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.

### ***Transmission Assets***

The Applicant explained that a conclusion had been reached that the projects should work collaboratively in connecting to the National Grid at Penwortham, in Lancashire. Additionally, the Applicants sought a Direction, under s35 of PA2008, from the Secretary of State that the Transmission Assets should be treated as development for which development consent is required; the Direction was issued on 4 October 2022.

The Applicant confirmed that it is seeking a single consent for Transmission Assets comprising shared offshore export cable corridors to onshore substations and onward connections to the National Grid at Penwortham, Lancashire. It is anticipated that the Transmission Assets DCO would authorise two coordinated, but electrically separate, sets of transmission works.

### ***Programme / Timeline***

The Applicant advised of the following timeline for the project:

- 2023: (targeting Q3) Statutory Consultation; and
- 2024: (targeting Q2/Q3) Application submitted for a Development Consent Order (DCO).

## ***Non-Statutory Consultation***

The Applicant confirmed that a further (i.e. second) round of Non-Statutory Consultation took place between 19 April and 4 June 2023, running in parallel to the Statutory Consultation periods for Morgan (Generation Assets); Morecambe (Generation Assets) and Mona offshore wind farms projects. This round of consultation for Transmission Assets focussed on the following in relation to route planning and site selection:

- Landfall and onshore export cable corridor;
- Substation search areas;
- Onshore export cable corridor (and temporary working areas); and
- Grid connection area.

Consultation invitation postcards were sent to approximately 100,000 addresses across the north-west of England, North Wales and the Isle of Man. Additionally, posters were displayed at prominent locations across the project area, and there were two joint press releases for all projects.

The advertising campaign spanned digital and audio means, including Spotify. At the start and during the consultation itself, the Applicant confirmed that an excess of 520 consultees were emailed.

Seven in-person events were held along with a webinar. In excess of 210 people attended the Transmission related consultation events.

## ***Feedback from the Non-Statutory Consultation***

The Applicant explained that there had been approximately 100 feedback submissions from stakeholders and members of the public, received via a mixture of online feedback forms, emails and hard copy freepost submissions.

The Applicant confirmed some of the key emerging themes which had emerged from the feedback, which includes the following:

- Potential visual impact of the proposed substations;
- Potential environmental impacts associated with the project (i.e. wildlife, ecology);
- Potential construction impact on local communities (e.g. Highways / traffic and transport related);
- Substation locations within the proposed substation zones;
- Impact on landowners;
- Flood risk;
- Some general support had been received for offshore wind and renewable energy; and
- Cumulative assessment between both generation assets' projects and the transmission assets project; and
- SNCB feedback received on Morgan Offshore Wind Projects' booster station search area and considered use of proposed cable protection.

The Inspectorate asked whether the Applicant had encountered any difficulties with gaining access to land for surveys. The Applicant responded that it had considerable positive engagement with landowners, and have come to agreements with many, but had utilised powers under Section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to ensure access to a number of land parcels to enable non-intrusive surveys, for example, phase 1 ecological surveys.

The Inspectorate asked whether the Applicant is planning a draft document review as part of its programme. The Applicant confirmed that consideration of the matter is ongoing and the matter will be discussed at subsequent meetings.

### ***Offshore Cable Route Selection: Landfall***

The Applicant explained that prior to the grid connection offer at Penwortham, the Search Area initially considered multiple locations between Middleton in the north, to Formby in the south, against anticipated connection points at either Middleton, Penwortham or Kirby. The Applicant explained that following an indication of grid connection offer at Penwortham, landfalls associated with Kirby and Middleton were discontinued. Penwortham landfall sites at Lytham St. Annes, Banks, Southport, Ainsdale and south of Formby were retained.

The Applicant explained that Banks and Southport were subsequently discounted as technically unfeasible. Additionally, a large intertidal zone with multiple designations was also noted for Banks. The Applicant explained that landfall areas around Ainsdale and South Formby were subsequently discounted.

As a result, the Applicant confirmed that the proposed landfall area in proximity to Lytham St. Annes was retained as the only viable landfall location.

### ***Offshore Cable Route Selection: Offshore Cable Route***

The Applicant explained that there were four initial route options, from the arrays to the proposed landfall area.

The Applicant confirmed that one of the routes that routed to the south of the Morgan and Morecambe array areas has been discounted, due to a technical challenge of third-party cables and pipelines to the south of the Morecambe Array Area. This Morgan route was discounted prior to the 'Co-ordination Agreement' and no Morecambe cable route has been developed for Route 4.

The other three route options have been retained to mitigate the technical and installation challenges until geophysical and geotechnical data has been analysed and route engineering completed, which is anticipated for Summer 2023. After which the project will review the information in relation to the route planning and site selection process.

### ***Final Offshore Cable Corridor for Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)***

The Applicant confirmed that landfall is in proximity to Lytham St. Annes, and that the offshore export cable corridor area is proposed to be reduced for statutory consultation and publication of the PEIR. The refined indicative PEIR boundary includes the Morgan Offshore Wind Project

offshore booster station search areas. These have been sited to avoid interactions with the following areas:

- West of Copeland & West of Walney Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs);
- Shell Flats and Lune Deep Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
- Outer Ribble Estuary designated shellfish waters;
- Outer Ribble Estuary designated shellfish waters;
- Sefton Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and
- Other wind farms and associated export cables.

Additionally, the proposed indicative offshore export cable corridor has been sited to minimise interaction where possible with:

- Ribble Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Ribble and Alt Estuaries Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar;
- Cables and pipelines; and
- Key vessel traffic routes and approaches to major ports.

The Applicant confirms that the proposed indicative PEIR boundary interacts with Fylde Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) and Liverpool Bay Special Protection Area (SPA).

### ***Ongoing Route Planning and Site Selection Process***

The Applicant confirmed that the route planning and site selection process is ongoing based on landowner, commercial, environmental and engineering constraints. The Applicant explained overarching principles have been established, such as finding the most direct and shortest route, to avoid small land holdings (where possible), and to cross utilities and roads as close to 90 degrees as possible.

### ***Route Planning & Site Selection (RPSS) Process***

The Applicant confirmed that ongoing site selection work has led to refinement of the following project infrastructure:

- Indicative proposed onshore export cable corridor (c. 120m);
- Indicative temporary compounds areas & options;
- Indicative temporary access tracks;
- Operational access points and tracks;
- Land Substation (LSS) – zones established (Non-Statutory Consultation); and
- Broad grid connection area – due to ongoing refinement work around the River Ribble crossing.

## ***Route Planning & Site Selection (RPSS) Process***

The Applicant confirmed that there is an incorporation of feedback and ongoing refinement of the route and development of the BRAG criteria – as new information is received and obtained by the project:

- Environmental information & data;
- Landowner engagement – on onshore export cable corridors;
- Feedback from evidence plan consultation and engagement and non-statutory consultation;
- Preliminary findings from impacts assessments and baseline information;
- Biodiversity net gain and enhancement land; and
- Drafting and updating commitments.

## ***Commitments Register (Draft for PEIR)***

The Applicant presented to the Inspectorate their Commitments Register table, which serves as a draft for the PEIR. This will be included as an application document in due course.

## ***Evidence Plan Process (EPP)***

The Applicant explained that is it planning for the next EWG meetings pre-PEIR to cover the following:

- Baseline and impact assessment methodology;
- Preliminary findings from impact assessments;
- Identification and consultation on initial identification of mitigation;
- Update on site selection;
- Update and summary of feedback received at Non-Statutory Consultation;
- Approach to cumulative assessment; and
- Construction scenarios.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure attendees were made aware of information on the project page of the Inspectorate's website.

