



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets</b>
<b>File reference</b>	<b>EN020028</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>The Planning Inspectorate</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>19 June 2024</b>
<b>Meeting with</b>	<b>Morgan Offshore Wind Limited and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</b>
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	<b>Project Update Meeting</b>
<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.

### Project overview

The Applicant provided an overview of the Proposed Development which will connect the proposed Morgan and Morecambe offshore wind projects to the National Grid at Penwortham substation. This application is being proposed by Morgan Offshore Wind Limited and Morecambe Offshore Windfarm Ltd as joint Applicants. The Applicant explained that the Proposed Development will include offshore export cables and landfall and onshore infrastructure required to connect both offshore wind farms to the national grid. The Inspectorate asked for clarification on whether the Penwortham substation requires any extension to accommodate the Proposed Development. The Applicant confirmed that no extension works to the Penwortham substation would be included in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

The Applicant provided an overview of the project programme for the Proposed Development:

- Statutory Consultation, including on the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) was undertaken Q4 2023, followed by a Targeted Statutory Consultation in Q1 2024; and
- Submission of DCO application is anticipated Q3 2024.

## **Site selection update**

The Applicant explained that it had made a number of project refinements including:

- Refinement of the offshore export cable corridor (e.g. reduction in the northern extent of Order Limits to address PEIR feedback);
- Refinement of the landfall area, and onshore export cable route;
- Refinement of 400kV grid connection cable corridor from the indicative search areas published at PEIR;
- Selection of substation sites: a single site for Morecambe and siting and orientation for Morgan; and
- Refinement of trenchless crossing techniques from the landfall and the River Ribble.

The Inspectorate queried the extent of optionality east of St Anne Old Links Golf Course that would be included in the DCO application. The Applicant confirmed that there is now a single option and the optionality south of Wrea Green had been reduced. The Applicant explained that the landfall area is highly contained due to constraints such as a railway, airport, housing developments and statutory designations in Lytham St Annes, and as a result it has worked to reduce disturbance to nearby receptors. The Inspectorate asked about the airport and Network Rail's position on the Proposed Development. The Applicant explained that discussions with the airport are ongoing and discussions with Network Rail will be progressed in relation to Protective Provisions. The Inspectorate advised that it is helpful for Protective Provisions to be agreed as early as possible for a timely Examination, or to evidence outstanding issues as clearly as possible.

The Inspectorate asked for an explanation as to why the Fairhaven saltmarsh area by the inner promenade is included in the red line boundary since it was not included at scoping. The Applicant explained that it has been included at PEIR as an area of potential mitigation.

## **Trenchless techniques and surveys**

The Applicant provided an overview of the trenchless techniques that could be used during the construction of the Proposed Development for areas of the onshore export cable corridor that are considered particularly complex or sensitive in nature. The Applicant explained that Direct Pipe is proposed to be used at the landfall while micro tunnelling or direct pipe or horizontal directional drilling (HDD) could be used at the River Ribble Crossing.

The Applicant stated that baseline ecology surveys have been undertaken since mid-2022. The Applicant explained that surveys completed for the PEIR, but which would now be outside the current Order Limits, will be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) where relevant to provide ecological context. Ecology and archaeological surveys are ongoing.

## **Project update**

The Applicant stated that Evidence Plan Process expert working groups (EWGs) continue and a steering group will be held in the coming weeks. A further round of engagement is

planned with some of the EWGs ahead of application submission. The Applicant also confirmed that there is ongoing engagement with offshore infrastructure asset owners in relation to crossing and proximity agreements. The Applicant explained that a project newsletter for local communities and stakeholders will be issued ahead of the submission of the DCO application. The Inspectorate advised that the information in the newsletter should also be included on the website, which the Applicant agreed to.

The Applicant provided an overview of mitigation, biodiversity benefit and enhancement areas. The Applicant explained its biodiversity benefit approach and stated that it will use Natural England's (NE) 4.0 metric to assess the units required to voluntarily achieve at least a 10% biodiversity gain for permanent areas of above ground infrastructure. Engagement with NE remains ongoing.

On Habitats Regulations Assessment matters, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant to progress discussions with NE as much as possible in pre-application in view to resolving issues prior to submission. Should NE continue to disagree with the Applicant's conclusions of no Adverse Effects on the Integrity, the Applicant is advised to consider producing a derogations case (without prejudice to their position). The Applicant advised that it has worked to reduce potential impacts and avoid LSE and has made a number of commitments and is consulting stakeholders, including NE, on proposed mitigation measures.

The Applicant provided an overview of the Commitments Register that presents measures (embedded mitigation, secondary & enhancement) to be adopted during the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning phases of the Proposed Development. The Applicant explained that a draft Commitments Register was published at PEIR and that each ES chapter will include a table which signposts to the relevant measures to be adopted and associated commitments. The Register will form an application document. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should be clear on where commitments are secured within the DCO.

## **Specific decisions/ follow-up required?**

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant and the Inspectorate will schedule a meeting ahead of the submission of the DCO application. The Inspectorate will provide suggested dates/times for the next meeting.