



## Meeting Note

<b>Status</b>	Final
<b>Author</b>	Mike Harris

<b>Meeting with</b>	RenewableUK
<b>Meeting date</b>	21 June 2012
<b>Attendees (Planning Inspectorate)</b>	Ian Gambles (Director, National Infrastructure) Sheila Twidle (Head of Environmental Services) Jessica Potter (Principal Case Manager) Mike Harris (Case Manager)
<b>Attendees (non Planning Inspectorate)</b>	Paul Reynolds (Offshore Wind Development Manager, Renewable UK) Tim Norman (NIRAS Consulting Ltd)
<b>Location</b>	The Planning Inspectorate Offices, 2 Rivergate, Bristol

<b>Meeting purpose</b>	Meeting to discuss Renewable UK draft Streamlining Consents Report and industry lessons learned
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<b>Summary of key points discussed and advice given</b>	<p>JP welcomed all to the meeting and briefly explained the background to and purpose for the meeting, namely for RenewableUK to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• provide an update on their draft Streamlining Consents Report;</li><li>• to seek feedback on key questions from their members in the offshore wind industry, and;</li><li>• discuss their Cumulative Impact Assessment (CIA) Guiding Principles Project.</li></ul> <p>PR provided an introduction to the Streamlining Consents Report and confirmed that having produced a draft report they are now discussing with Government ahead of refining the recommendations contained within it.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the recommendations contained within the draft report. With regard to the role of 'honest broker' The Planning Inspectorate indicated that it would be inappropriate for it to take on such a role at the pre-application stage although it is willing to facilitate discussions and provide advice where requested and appropriate. Specifically it was noted that in certain circumstances it would be possible to facilitate tri-partite meetings subject to resource availability.</p> <p>In response to questions from The Planning Inspectorate regarding the view of industry relating to advice provided in the past, TN explained that concerns exist due to developers</p>
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feeling advice have gone further. Furthermore, concerns relating to publication of initial, preparatory thoughts on how to approach particular issues were raised in respect of The Planning Inspectorate's openness policy.

With further regard to draft recommendation 7 and the preparation of industry good practice guidance, RenewableUK sought to understand whether The Planning Inspectorate could assist. In response it was highlighted that The Planning Inspectorate has already published a number of Advice Notes (updated where necessary in response to lessons learned/feedback) and that in this instance it may be more appropriate for good practice guidance to come from the industry itself.

The discussion continued regarding the varied approaches and concerns within industry with respect to how developers approach CIA and transboundary consultation. It was acknowledged by RenewableUK that there is nervousness within the industry in respect of this matter. The Planning Inspectorate acknowledged that this is still a new process for all parties and advised that published Advice Notes do cover these matters. Furthermore it was suggested that developers consider the experience of the TCPA process in such areas.

RenewableUK queried whether The Planning Inspectorate would follow the approach of the MMO who meet with applicants post decision to review the consenting process and lessons learnt. It was highlighted that to date there are no applications which have had a finalised Development Consent Order made and until such a time it will be difficult to draw lessons on the full process. The Inspectorate explained that it is committed to regular reviews of process stages and events undertaken to see where improvements can be made going forward.

With regard to recommendation 8 and industry training, The Planning Inspectorate confirmed that members of staff have previously attended briefings from within the industry and regulators and that the case team is now structured around the main industry sectors such as offshore renewables, onshore renewables and electricity networks in order to develop industry knowledge, build stakeholder relationships and strive for consistency.

A discussion was held regarding whether there are perceptions within the industry that certain regulators or consultees are struggling to resource the Planning Act 2008 process. RenewableUK confirmed that the situation is becoming critical in some instances, most notably in some of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies. The point was noted by The Planning Inspectorate who acknowledged that this matter had also been raised by individual developers on projects.

	<p>With respect to a query about how The Planning Inspectorate would deal with Appropriate Assessment matters during examinations it was confirmed that they would be dealt with by the appointed Examining authorities with support from the Inspectorate's Environmental Services team but that scope exists to appoint external assessors where required. The importance for developers and statutory bodies to agree common ground in advance of submission and during the pre-examination period was reiterated. It was noted that live examinations can be extremely busy periods and it is therefore advisable to address outstanding matters as early as possible in the process. During an examination, the Examining authority can pose detailed questions on an issue to any party and normal deadlines for response are 21 days.</p> <p>RenewableUK briefly outlined the scope of their project to consider CIA Guiding Principles and extended an invitation to The Planning Inspectorate to take part. The invitation was acknowledged and further information requested in order for future involvement to be considered, subject to resources.</p> <p>RenewableUK queried whether The Planning Inspectorate had any general feedback for the industry. In response it was suggested that, where possible, developers might consider sharing datasets in order to ensure a consistent approach to analysis. It was also recommended that once an application is accepted for examination, developers make themselves aware of what is expected of them to resource the practical elements of the examination, such as organising hearings and site visits. Finally, it was suggested that developers might assist resource planning for statutory bodies by providing them with clear programmes of work for the pre-application phase and identifying dates in which specific consultation responses might be requested.</p> <p><i>Any other business</i></p> <p>RenewableUK queried how minutes of the meeting would be taken forward; it was confirmed that these would be shared in draft prior to publication on the Inspectorate's s.51 advice log. It was agreed that they could then be circulated to RenewableUK members.</p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting was useful and a further one would be organised for September/October 2012.</p>
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<b>Follow up required?</b>	JP/PR to liaise on a date for a future meeting.
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<b>Circulation List</b>	Attendees above RenewableUK to circulate to members
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