



Meeting note

File reference	EN010087
Status	Final
Author	Siân Evans
Date	20 April 2017
Meeting with	Vattenfall
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Kay Sully (Case Manager) Siân Evans (Case Officer) Richard Kent (Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Vattenfall Helen Jameson Joanna Clements Göran Loman Sean Leake
Meeting objectives	Thanet Extension project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Introduction

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate continued by outlining its openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant (or others) can rely.

Project update

The Applicant advised that they are still in discussions with The Crown Estate for an Agreement for Lease and with National Grid for a grid connection date. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to get these in place before the application is submitted as the Examining Authority (ExA) is likely to seek evidence that the project can proceed.

The Applicant is considering two different landfall points and cable routes (as identified in their Scoping Report and which were consulted on in the Public Information Days (PIDs)). They are currently working to more fully understand the issues surrounding each option.

The Applicant explained that they plan to use a 3D virtual flythrough as part of their consultation material and next set of PIDs during Section 42 consultation. This aids the public's engagement and understanding of the project. The Inspectorate advised that it is unlikely this will be able to be hosted on our website and the Applicant confirmed that they were only proposing to use it for consultation purposes and that it would not form part of their application documents.

Evidence Plan/ Steering Group

The Applicant advised it was broadening its Evidence Plan process to cover a number of EIA issues and enquired whether the Inspectorate would be able to chair the next Steering Group, which is likely to be held in June. The Inspectorate advised that Evidence Plans are becoming more autonomously led by developers, however we can chair these if requested providing sufficient notice is given and depending on available resource and location of the meeting.

Scoping and transboundary screening

The Inspectorate noted that only one parish council had responded to the scoping consultation. However the Applicant advised that they are engaging with parish and other councils in the local area, and they were well represented at the PIDs.

The Inspectorate also discussed the comments from some consultees who had raised potential concerns that the Thanet Extension project was relying on survey data from Thanet Offshore Wind Farm (TOWF) and therefore it could be considered out of date. The Applicant stated that where data from surveys from the previous project were being used, they were also conducting new surveys so as to inform the assessment. The Inspectorate advised that where data from previous surveys is used to ensure that this is justified in informing the baseline conditions to be presented in the Environmental Statement.

The Inspectorate advised that they are in the process of determining whether or not, in the view of the Secretary of State, the development is likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State. This will take the form of a transboundary screening document which should be completed in the next few weeks.

Surveys

The Applicant advised that they are proposing to use less than 24 months of offshore ornithology surveys to form part of their EIA and HRA for the DCO submission. It is considered that Natural England (NE) and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds are unlikely to support less than the standard 24 months, but have acknowledged the relatively low ornithological sensitivity of the site. The Applicant also noted that there is precedence for offshore wind farm consenting on less than 4 months of data. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure a Statement of Common Ground is in place with NE so that the ExA is clear on where exactly they do not agree. It was also acknowledged that this will be a key discussion point as part of the ongoing Evidence Plan process.

Draft documents

The Inspectorate advised that if the Applicant would like the Inspectorate to review draft documents they should be submitted no later than two to three months before submission of the application. The Inspectorate will aim to complete this review within four weeks. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to look at draft document reviews for other projects on the Inspectorate's website to get an idea of what is being looked for. It is also a good idea to get someone who hasn't drafted a particular document to check it against the s55 checklist to see whether they can find the relevant information and consider the questions that the Inspectorate will be looking at during the acceptance period.

Programme for submission

The Applicant is intending to start their statutory consultation in August 2017, running until September/ early October. It is hoped this period will cover both tourists visiting the area and local residents returning from the summer holiday period.

The Applicant is aiming for submission of the DCO application in January 2018.

AOB

It was agreed that the next meeting would be a teleconference on 6 June 2017. Prior to this, the Applicant and their agents will contact the Inspectorate around the arrangements for the next Evidence Plan steering group meeting which is currently scheduled for June 2017.