

Application by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd for an Order granting Development Consent for the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm

Notification of the date, time, and venue for the Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1) on 2, 3 and 4 April 2025 was provided in the Examining Authority's Rule 8 letter dated 4 February 2025 [[PD-008](#)].

Agenda for ISH1: Onshore environmental effects

Hearing	Date and Time	Location
ISH 1	Wednesday 2 & Thursday 3 April 2025 Friday 4 April may be used if necessary Hearing start time at 10am on each day Registration and seating available at venue from 9:30am and virtual Registration Process from 9:30am	Wivenhoe House Hotel, Wivenhoe Park, Park Road, Colchester, CO4 3FA and By virtual means using Microsoft Teams

Agenda

(Note: it is currently envisaged that the topics will be spread over the 3 allocated days in the following way. This is subject to change, and we ask that the relevant attendees make themselves available for the eventuality of the matters exceeding the envisaged schedule. For clarity, to allow participants to plan their attendance, topics scheduled to start on 3 April will not be brought forward to 2 April).

Date	Topic
Wednesday 2 April	Landscape and visual impact and design; Historic Environment and Archaeology; Traffic & Transportation; Noise and any other health impacts.
Thursday 3 April	Agriculture and other land uses, ground conditions and soils; Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water; Socio Economic Effects; Cumulative Effects; Coordination and alternatives.

Date	Topic
Friday 4 April	Reserve session if required for completion of topics.

1. Welcome, introductions, arrangements for the hearing

2. Purpose of this Issue Specific Hearing

ISH1 is being held to hear evidence relating to matters in respect of the following topics:

- Landscape and visual impact and design
- Historic Environment and Archaeology (On and offshore)
- Traffic & Transportation
- Noise and any other health impacts
- Agriculture and other land uses, ground conditions and soils
- Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water
- Socio Economic Effects
- Cumulative Effects
- Coordination and alternatives.

The giving of evidence at this hearing will be led by the Examining Authority (ExA), through the ExA's asking of questions of the applicant and relevant other IPs, informed by the cases that have been made by parties up to and inclusive of the written and oral submissions made by Examination Deadline 3 (18 March 2025). A list of documents that may be referred to during discussion of the agenda items is presented in Annex 1.

3. Matters for discussion at this hearing

ISH1 - Onshore environmental effects	
3.1	Landscape and visual impact and design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the proposal would enable the Secretary of State to discharge the section 85 Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 duty as amended by section 245(6) of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. • Whether the impacts on visual amenity during construction and operation have been adequately assessed. • Whether Natural England's representations and issues log in REP3-064 at Appendix I - Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which suggests that a revised assessment is required, have been addressed. This includes whether or not the impacts on visual amenity during construction and operation have been adequately assessed.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether, or not, the Applicant has coordinated the design of the proposed onshore substation (OnSS) with the proposed Five Estuaries Offshore Windfarm (VEOWF) substation. If coordinated, how this would progress? • What would be the effect of nighttime lighting at the proposed OnSS both alone, and cumulatively with other proposals nearby? • Whether the proposed mitigation at the OnSS of the Proposed Development would provide adequate visual screening, and how would this relate to the VEOWF proposed development visual screening.
3.2	Historic Environment and Archaeology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the adverse effects on buried archaeological assets would be effectively mitigated through the proposed mitigation. • Whether the effects on Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets have been adequately assessed • Whether the proposed mitigation for the Conservation Areas and Heritage Assets would be sufficient, and whether there would be a need for additional mitigation? • Whether the proposed offshore cable corridor from the proposed development would adversely affect sediment and geoarchaeological potential. • Whether any amendments are required to the draft DCO requirements or associated Management Plans.
3.3	Traffic & Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether there are any onshore port and transportation impacts that would arise from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the offshore works. • Whether the proposed mitigation to limit Heavy Goods Vehicle numbers would be sufficiently robust, precise and enforceable, or whether provision should be made for any additional mitigation measures. • Whether the personnel travel measures identified in the outline construction traffic management plan would be sufficiently robust, precise and enforceable to support the assumptions for single occupancy vehicle trips. • Whether the mitigation would be adequate for the outstanding risks associated with the Abnormal Indivisible Loads proposals.
3.4	Noise and any other health impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For construction, whether the proposed mitigation measures for noise and vibration are sufficient, well defined and secured in the draft DCO.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the substation operation, how sufficient good design measures have been incorporated to reduce and mitigate noise effects. • Position relating to Electro-Magnetic Fields.
3.5	Agriculture and other land uses, ground conditions and soils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of BMV land and the long-term effects on agricultural land classification. • Restoration and reinstatement of soils. • The temporary and permanent effects on agricultural activities. • The width of the cable corridor and depth of the cables.
3.6	Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the proposed development has adequately taken account of those residents whose water supply is only guaranteed through well water supply. • Disapplication of environmental permits for abstraction and dewatering activity: whether or not an abstraction license or exemption is in fact required. • Whether the Applicant's position regarding a post-consent FRA is considered best practice. • The extent to which the Flood Risk Assessment provided post-consent would adequately assess the risk to third parties and allow for consideration of mitigation in the decision-making process. • Whether sufficient coordination of landfall flood defence impact has been progressed with the VEOWF. • Construction related impacts and flood risk: whether or not the position of the Environment Agency regarding the Code of Construction Practice, and trenched crossings and haul road crossings using HDD has been addressed.
3.7	Socio Economic Effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support would be given to the local population to access the employment opportunities that are anticipated and to ensure that the employment benefits are realised for the local area. • Whether proposals can be taken forward to ensure that local supply chains benefit from the proposed development. • What, if any, community benefits are proposed and how would these be secured.
3.8	Cumulative Effects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the proposed development should include provision for additional mitigation for cumulative noise effects from construction traffic, and if so, how would that be secured.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the substation operation, whether sufficient good design measures have been incorporated to reduce and mitigate noise effects. • Whether the cumulative impact on archaeology with the cable corridor associated with VEOWF has been adequately assessed. • The adequacy of the cumulative effects assessment (CEA) in relation to the consideration of the proposed development together with the VEOWF and the Norwich to Tilbury and other development projects.
3.9	<p>Coordination and alternatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant has fully explored, in co-ordination with other parties, the options for an integrated offshore connection in accordance with NPS policies. • Whether there is a viable alternative offshore option to an onshore radial connection that could deliver a connection for the proposed development within an appropriate timescale. • Whether the application for the proposed development is premature given the stage that National Grid's Norwich to Tilbury project has reached in the development consent process. • Whether the North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, the VEOWF, the Tarchon Interconnector and the Norwich to Tilbury projects should be examined as one application? • The consideration of alternatives to the siting of the onshore sub-station having regard to the ultimate selection of the onshore substation site on Grade 1 Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. • Whether any greater degree of co-ordination between the applicant and the VEOWF project could be achieved in order to minimise the impact on farmland of the onshore substation and onshore cable route.

4. Any other matters

5. Close of hearing

Attendees

Based on Relevant Representations received and input into the Examination to date, the ExA would find it helpful if the following parties could attend this hearing for the agenda items shown in the table below.

Agenda Item 3.1 Landscape and visual impact and design	Agenda Item 3.2 Historic Environment and Archaeology	Agenda Item 3.3 Traffic & Transportation
Applicant Essex County Council Suffolk County Council Tendring District Council Babergh District Council Natural England Suffolk and East Coast and Heaths National Landscape Partnership	Applicant Essex County Council Suffolk County Council Tendring District Council Historic England	Applicant National Highways Essex County Council (in its capacity as the local highway authority) Tendring District Council Suffolk County Council (in its capacity as a local highway authority) Network Rail
Agenda Item 3.4 Noise and any other health impacts	Agenda Item 3.5 Agriculture and other land uses, ground conditions and soils	Agenda Item 3.6 Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water
Applicant National Highways Essex County Council Tendring District Council Suffolk County Council UK Health Security Agency	Applicant T & R Fairley Farming Partnership T Fairley & Sons Ltd Brockthorpe Consultancy	Applicant Essex County Council Suffolk County Council Tendring District Council Environment Agency
Agenda Item 3.7 Socio Economic Effects	Agenda Item 3.8 Cumulative Effects	Agenda Item 3.9 Coordination and alternatives
Applicant Suffolk County Council Essex County Council	Applicant National Highways. Essex County Council Tendring District Council Suffolk County Council	Applicant Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm Limited National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc Essex County Council Tendring District Council Ardleigh Parish Council

However, this does not indicate that other parties will not be able to contribute. All interested parties (IP) are invited to attend and make oral representations on the matters set out in the agenda, subject to the ExA's ability to control the hearing.

The ExA has sought to provide sufficient detail to assist the parties to prepare for the hearing. The details set out above are indicative and the ExA may find it necessary to include additional Agenda items or to amend the order in which the items are dealt with.

Anyone wishing to attend the hearing in person, who has not already advised the Case Team of this, should do so as soon as possible.

The event will be livestreamed and a link for watching the livestream will be posted on the [project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning website](#) closer to the hearing date. IPs and members of the public who wish to observe the hearing can therefore view and listen to the hearing using the livestream, or view and listen to the recording, after it has concluded.

Timing

The ExA will keep to the agenda as much as possible. The first and second days of the hearings are not expected to go beyond 17:00. If necessary, the hearing will recommence at 10:00 on Friday 4 April.

Anyone who is not able to provide all their oral submissions by the close of the hearing should follow it up in writing at Deadline 4 (25 April 2025).

Registration Process

Parties who have registered to speak (both in person and virtually) will receive a joining instruction email shortly before the hearing which will include a link to the virtual event on Microsoft Teams, and a telephone number should they need to participate by telephone. To enable the hearing to start on time at **10am** those attending virtually should join promptly at **9:30am** to ensure that all virtual attendees can complete the registration process in good time. A waiting room will be used, and attendees will be admitted one at a time to register. We will endeavour to carry out registration as quickly as possible, however as this process will depend on the number of attendees we cannot provide a timeframe for the wait.

Procedure at ISH

Guidance under the Planning Act 2008 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 provides that it is for the ExA to probe, test and assess the evidence through direct questions of persons making oral representations at hearings. Questioning at the hearing will be led by the ExA. Cross questioning of a person giving evidence by another person will only be permitted if the ExA decides it is necessary to ensure representations are adequately tested or that an IP has had a fair chance to put its case.

Annex 1 – Relevant application and other documents to be considered:

Please note some references to documents may be very limited but have been included for completeness. References made to page number during ISH1 will relate to electronic version of the documents.

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
	Landscape and visual impact and design:
APP-043	3.1.31 Environmental Statement Chapter 29 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Figures within APP-077 to APP-082
APP-044	3.1.32 Environmental Statement Chapter 30 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Figures within APP-083 to APP-088
APP-170	3.3.69 Environmental Statement Appendix 29.1 SLVIA and VM
REP1-035	7.14 Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Strategy (Rev 1) (Clean)
REP1-071	Appendix I2 to the Relevant Representations of Natural England Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
REP2-024	9.22 Applicant's Response to Natural England's Relevant Representation Appendix I2 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Rev 0)
REP1-065	Essex County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-063	Babergh DC - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-071	Natural England - Appendix I2 to the Relevant Representations of Natural England Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
REP1-074	Suffolk County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1) (Rev 0)
REP2-023	9.21 Applicant's Response to Local Impact Reports

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
REP2-024	9.22 Applicant's Response to Natural England's Relevant Representation Appendix I2 Seascape, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Rev 0)
REP2-036	Essex County Council and Tendring District Council Joint Response to ExQ1
REP2-059	Suffolk County Council - Responses to ExQ1
RR-316	Representation by Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership (Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape Partnership)
REP3-054	Essex County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
REP3-068	Suffolk County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
REP3-036	9.25 Applicant's Comments on Responses to ExQ1 (Rev 0)
REP3-043	9.32 Onshore substations operational noise and the outline noise complaints protocol (Rev 0)
REP3-044	9.33 Assessment of the Special Qualities of the Suffolk and Essex Coast and Heaths National Landscape and Suffolk Heritage Coast - Technical Note (Rev 0)
REP3-063	Natural England- Appendix H3.2 Natural England's comments on 7.15 Outline Horizontal Directional Drill Method Statement and Contingency Plan [REP1-038]
REP3-064	Natural England - Appendix K3 Natural England's Risk and Issues Log
	Historic Environment and Archaeology:
APP-030	3.1.18 Environmental Statement Chapter 16 Offshore and Intertidal Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
APP-109	3.3.17 Environmental Statement Appendix 16.1 Archaeological Assessment of Geophysical Data
APP-061	3.2.12 Environmental Statement Chapter 16 Figures

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
APP-039	3.1.27 Environmental Statement Chapter 25 Onshore Archaeology and Cultural Heritage and Appendices APP-144 to APP-159
APP-072	3.2.21 Environmental Statement Chapter 25 Figures
APP-208	5.13 Historic Environment Plan Onshore
APP-209	5.14 Historic Environment Plan Offshore
APP-247	7.12 Outline Onshore Written Scheme of Investigation
REP1-065	Essex County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-074	Suffolk County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1) (Rev 0)
REP2-023	9.21 Applicant's Response to Local Impact Reports
REP2-038	Historic England - Responses to ExQ1
REP2-039	Historic England - Written representations (WR), including summaries of any WR exceeding 1500 words
REP3-054	Essex County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
REP3-015	North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd - 7.11 Outline Offshore Written Scheme of Investigation (Rev 2) (Clean)
REP3-068	Suffolk County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
REP3-036	9.25 Applicant's Comments on Responses to ExQ1 (Rev 0)
	Traffic & Transportation:
APP-041	3.1.29 Environmental Statement Chapter 27 Traffic and Transport
APP-248	7.13 Outline Code of Construction Practice
APP-251	7.16 Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
REP1-065	Essex County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-074	Suffolk County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1) (Rev 0)
REP2-023	9.21 Applicant's Response to Local Impact Reports
REP2-036	Essex County Council and Tendring District Council Joint Response to ExQ1
REP2-049	National Highways Responses to ExQ1
REP2-059	Suffolk County Council - Responses to ExQ1
REP3-036	9.25 Applicant's Comments on Responses to ExQ1 (Rev 0)
REP3-053	National Highways Comments on responses to ExQ1
REP3-054	Essex County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
REP3-068	Suffolk County Council - Comments on any submissions received at the previous deadline
	Noise and any other health impacts:
APP-248	7.13 Outline Code of Construction Practice
APP-251	7.16 Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
REP1-065	Essex County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1) (Rev 0)
REP2-036	Essex County Council and Tendring District Council Joint Response to ExQ1

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
APP-042	Environmental Statement Chapter 28, Human Health
REP2-027	Statement of Common Ground-UK Health Security Agency
REP3-036	9.25 Applicant's Comments on Responses to ExQ1 (Rev 0)
REP3-043	9.32 Onshore substations operational noise and the outline noise complaints protocol (Rev 0)
	Agriculture and Land Use, Ground Conditions and Soils
APP-033	Environmental Statement Chapter 19, Ground Conditions and Contamination
APP-036	Environmental Statement Chapter 22, Land Use and Agriculture
REP1-033	Outline Code of Construction Practice
REP1-004	Co-ordination Report
REP1-082	T & R Fairley Farming Partnership
REP1-083	The Executors of the Estate of Mr Charles Tabor
AS-034	Brockthorpe Consultancy
RR-324	T & R Fairley Farming Partnership
	Flood Risk, groundwater and surface water
APP-033	3.1.21 Environmental Statement Chapter 19 Ground Conditions and Contamination
APP-064	3.2.15 Environmental Statement Chapter 19 Figures
APP-035	3.1.23 Environmental Statement Chapter 21 Water Resources and Flood Risk
APP-066	3.2.17 Environmental Statement Chapter 21 Figures
APP-119	3.3.27 Environmental Statement Appendix 21.1 Geomorphology Baseline Survey
APP-120	3.3.28 Environmental Statement Appendix 21.2 Water Environment Regulations Compliance Assessment
APP-121	3.3.29 Environmental Statement Appendix 21.3 Flood Risk Assessment
APP-213	5.18 Water Bodies in a River Basin Management Plan

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
REP1-062	Babergh District Council - Written summaries of oral submissions made at the PM or hearings
REP1-063	Babergh District Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-064	East Suffolk Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-065	Essex County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP1-074	Suffolk County Council - Local Authorities Local Impact Report
REP2-036	Essex County Council and Tendring District Council – Responses to ExQ1
REP2-034	Environment Agency – Responses to ExQ1
	Socio-Economic Effects
APP-253	Outline Skills and Employment Plan
AS-010	Environmental Statement Chapter 31, Socio Economics
REP1-065	Essex County Council Local Impact Report
REP1-074	Suffolk County Council Local Impact Report
	Cumulative Effects
	For the cumulative noise effects, please refer to the documents listed in the Noise and any other health impacts section above.
REP3-043	9.31 Cumulative Effects Assessment Summary
	Co-ordination and Alternatives
APP-018	3.1.6 Environmental Statement Chapter 4 Site Selection and Assessment of Alternatives
APP-091	3.3.1.1 Environmental Statement Appendix 4.1 Site Selection Golden Rules
APP-091a	3.3.1.2 Environmental Statement Appendix 4.2 Site Selection and Assessment of Alternatives Consultation Responses

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
AS-042	8.2 Applicant's Response to Procedural Decisions
RR-093	Relevant Representation Essex County Council
RR-318	Relevant Representation Suffolk County Council
RR-327	Relevant Representation Tendring District Council
RR-027	Relevant Representation Ardleigh Parish Council
RR-203	Relevant Representation Little Bromley Parish Council
REP1-004	2.5 Co-ordination Report (Rev 2) (Clean)
REP1-046	9.3 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations from Local Authorities and Parish Councils (Rev 0)
REP1-047	9.4 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations Received from Parties with Land Interests (Rev 0)
REP1-048	9.5 Applicant's Response to Relevant Representations Received from Members of the Public (Rev 0)
REP1-065	Essex County Council LIR
REP1-082	T & R Fairley Farming Partnership Written summaries of oral submissions made at the PM or hearings
REP1-084	Glynis Robertson Written summaries of oral submissions made at the PM
REP2-004	2.1 Needs Case and Project Benefits Statement (Rev 1)
REP2-020	9.19 Applicant's Response to Written Questions (ExQ1)
REP2-022	9.20 Applicant's Comments on other Deadline 1 Submissions
REP2-023	9.21 Applicant's Response to Local Impact Reports
REP2-036	Responses to ExQ1 - Essex County Council and Tendring District Council Joint Response to ExQ1

Examination Library Reference	Document Title
REP2-047	National Grid Electricity Transmission Plc Written representations (WR), including summaries of any WR exceeding 1500 words