



Inception Meeting note

Project name	Calderdale Energy Park
Case reference	EN0110023
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date of meeting	15 July 2025
Meeting with	Calderdale Wind Farm Limited (the applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Circulation	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 (PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

1. The proposed development

Detailed description of the proposed development

The applicant explained that Calderdale Energy Park is a proposed new onshore wind farm exceeding 100MW with associated battery storage and infrastructure that would help meet the United Kingdom's need for low-carbon, homegrown energy. The point of connection (between Calderdale Energy Park and National Grid Electricity Transmission), and associated cable route is yet to be finalised. The applicant advised that it first announced a wind farm development in September 2023 which was originally known as Calderdale Wind Farm which comprised of up to sixty-five wind turbines, potential inclusion of solar panels, and a battery energy storage system (BESS). Following baseline survey data and design work in 2024, revised plans are currently being developed. The current proposed development will feature up to forty-one wind turbines and associated BESS, with a generation capacity of over 100MW.

The Inspectorate queried if there is proposed flexibility for the make of turbine and if so the maximum height for each turbine. The applicant confirmed the maximum height would be up to a 200-metre tip.

Site Location and context

The applicant explained the site is located across 2,352 hectares of land at Walshaw Moor on either side of three Walshaw Dean reservoirs in the Metropolitan Borough of Calderdale, West Yorkshire. The site is an upland moorland plateau with a diverse range of habitats and the land is predominantly covered by peat, with various depths in places, making it a carbon store. The applicant is in conversations with Natural England regarding peat. The site is located within the South Pennine moor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and located within the Bronte country, and is in close proximity to Hardcastle Crag. The applicant confirmed it has an introductory meeting set up with Historic England to discuss the cultural heritage implications.

The Inspectorate asked if there were any other existing tall infrastructure in the area. The applicant advised there were several other wind farm developments in reasonably close proximity to the site.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant about alternatives explored to help minimise the impact on peat. The applicant confirmed it has specialists within the team and has experience of wind development in Scotland and Wales so has experience working in peat areas. The applicant confirmed it is working through all the relevant guidance and working alongside Natural England and the Environment Agency. The Inspectorate suggested discussions are held at future project update meetings to discuss advice received from Natural England and how any concerns are being addressed.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant if it has a discretionary advice service agreement with Natural England and the Environment Agency. The applicant confirmed it has with both and in the process of establishing one with Historic England.

The Inspectorate queried the proximity of the proposed turbines to residential properties. The applicant is currently reviewing the location and proximity of turbines to houses and has taken onboard feedback from local residents, which has been mainly on visual and noise impact, rather than shadow flicker. The Inspectorate suggested it is important that the applicant documents how it has taken on board feedback, especially if it resulted in any changes to the design of the project.

Grid connection options

The applicant explained it is preparing and submitting two applications for a connection through the Gate 2 process.

The Inspectorate advised the applicant that if connection optionality remained at the point of DCO application submission it could add significant complexity to the examination process. The applicant confirmed by the application submission it is hoping to have clarity on point of connection.

Access routes

The applicant explained it is considering two construction access route options, as follows:

1. Route follows the M62, A57, A629 and A646 before following the Warley Road, Spring Hall Lane and Moor End Road. The route continues on Mount Tabor Road and Cold Edge Road via Withens Road. From there three options to link to the A6033 are being considered. This route would only be used for Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV)/ delivery access.
2. Route follows the M65 and A6068. Since non-statutory consultation a new connection option to Two Laws Road has been identified from the A6068 and is currently under review. This route is for Abnormal Indivisible Loads (AIL) AIL and HGV access.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant if routeing options had been discussed with the local highway authority(ies) and National Highways in relation to the potential widening of roads. The applicant confirmed once the design is finalised, engagement will commence. The applicant has undertaken an initial route survey, and some initial analysis. The applicant confirmed routeing will be included within the DCO, rather than a matter for consideration after a decision on the DCO application.

The applicant confirmed that within the site tracks to each turbine would be required.

Consenting programme and introduction to the pre-application programme document

The applicant advised Calderdale Energy Park was launched publicly in April 2025 which comprised of the publication of a project website and meetings with various consultees and stakeholders. It confirmed the Programme Document was submitted to the Inspectorate on 24 June 2025 and will publish it on its website once it has been reviewed. The Inspectorate's comments on the Programme Document are noted in Annex A.

The applicant provided the following programme for the consenting regime:

Non-Statutory Consultation – April to June 2025
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report submission – Summer 2025
Receipt of Scoping Opinion – Autumn 2025
Consultation on draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) – Autumn 2025
Publication of Statement of Community Consultation – Autumn 2025
Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) – Winter 2025
Statutory Consultation – Winter 2025
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) – Early 2026
DCO submission – Spring 2026

The Inspectorate advised the applicant must provide the GIS shapefile at least ten days prior to the submission of an EIA Scoping Report. The pre-application fee must also be paid beforehand.

The Inspectorate queried whether the applicant envisages submitting draft documents for review by the Inspectorate, ahead of the application submission. The applicant confirmed it is still under consideration and will update on this matter in due course.

Early engagement with statutory bodies and local authorities, and other stakeholder engagement to date

The applicant confirmed it has had early engagement with the following stakeholders – Calderdale Council, Bradford Council, Calderdale Councillors, Local MPs, Local Parish and Town Councils, Leeds Bradford, Blackpool and Manchester Airports, Met Office, NATS, Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant if there are airports in close proximity to the site. The applicant confirmed there are 4 key airports – Leeds Bradford, Blackpool, Manchester and Warton Aerodrome and it is discussions with all parties. It has received detailed comments from the NATS and the MET office and are currently working through those.

Environmental constraints and issues

The applicant presented the key environmental constraints for the development:

- Designations – Calderdale Energy Park is located within the South Pennines SAC, SPA and SSSI. There are also nearby ancient woodlands. The applicant is currently undertaking baseline surveys and preliminary mapping on designations. The applicant confirmed that turbine locations have been carefully selected to minimise potential impacts.
- Habitats – there are several distinct habitats within the site. The applicant has identified a significant fungus (Calderdale fungi) and a survey undertaken in 2023/2024 has been used in terms of approach to mitigation, compensation, habitat enhancement and turbine location. The proposed turbine locations aim to minimise potential impacts on the most sensitive habitats and species and there will also be habitat restoration measures to improve the biodiversity of the site.
- Protected species – anticipated to exist within and near the site.
- Peatland – identified on the site, although much of this is degraded and sub-optimal. The applicant undertook a peat survey in February 2022 and are focusing on using areas of lower peat to locate the turbines.
- Hydrology – there are several waterbodies and watercourses within the site. There are recognised flooding issues further downstream from the Proposed Development in Hebden Bridge. The applicant is engaging with both the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) on hydrology and flooding risk.
- Public Access, Green Belt and Recreation – The eastern portion of the site is located within the Green Belt and there are several footpaths and bridleways within the site, as well as a National Trail (The Pennine Way).
- Cultural Heritage – Statutory Designations and Bronte County. There are several listed buildings within close proximity to the site, mainly in the south of the proposed project boundary. As part of the EIA, the impact of the proposals will be assessed on heritage assets.

The Inspectorate advised the applicant on the importance of clearly explaining the site selection process, including approach to alternatives, in both the consultation and application documents.

Environmental surveys

The applicant detailed the environmental surveys carried out to date which are inputting into the project design:

- Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) – Site walkover carried out
- Hydrology/ Peat – Peat Phase 1 probing
- Cultural Heritage – Site walkover to inform a setting assessment
- Noise – Background noise monitoring was undertaken at nine locations (13 March to 7 May 2025)
- Access - Primary Route Access Survey carried out to inform AIL
- Various ecology surveys
- Various ornithological surveys

The applicant confirmed there are a number of environmental surveys to be completed.

The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of agreeing baseline or survey methodology with ecologists in the relevant agencies and LPAs. The applicant confirmed it has been consulting with Natural England and the Environment Agency regarding ecology surveys. The Inspectorate also advised the applicant to ensure that evidence of agreements is included in the application documents in due course.

The Inspectorate queried if there had been any difficulties with accessing land for undertaking surveys. The applicant confirmed it obtained the relevant consents from Natural England. In relation to landowners, voluntary agreements will be sought in the first instance.

The Inspectorate queried the time of year photography surveys would be undertaken for the LVIA. The applicant confirmed they will happen during both in winter and summer.

Consultation (statutory and non-statutory)

The applicant confirmed it has recently concluded non-statutory consultation which resulted in over 1,000 responses of which nineteen were from prescribed consultees. Feedback so far has focussed on environmental topics, site selection, access routes, noise impacts, construction and the NSIP process. It is expecting to undertake statutory consultation in Winter 2025/2026. The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will initially be circulated to the Local Authorities as a draft with formal consultation in September – October 2025.

The applicant explained its consultation methods which includes meetings with local elected representatives and technical stakeholders, newsletter, information available through the applicant's website, public events, webinars and advertising through social media, local newspapers, local radio stations, press releases and posters within local community venues.

The Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly explain any community benefits within consultation documentation. The Inspectorate also commented on the importance of recording how consultation was carried out adequately and proportionately. The applicant should also evidence any engagement with action groups.

The Inspectorate advised the applicant, upon submission of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Statement (AoCM), to highlight any concerns raised about consultation undertaken and detail how concerns have been addressed.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant if it has an evidence plan process in relation to Habitats Regulations assessment issues and timescales. The applicant confirmed an evidence plan process has been discussed with Natural England and it is very likely that a derogation case will be submitted as part of the DCO application. The Inspectorate emphasised the need for close working with Natural England.

2. The pre-application service offer

The applicant stated its preferred tier for the pre-application is standard. The Inspectorate considered that standard service plus was likely to be appropriate and would confirm this following the meeting. **Post Meeting Note:** the Inspectorate has confirmed this tier.

3. Next steps

The applicant should provide an update on EIA scoping timescales. The Inspectorate suggested the next project update meeting is arranged after the scoping opinion has been provided.

Annex A

Comments on the Programme Document (PD)

- Generally, good demonstration of compliance with the Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Guidance. The Applicant will be aware that one of the mandatory components of the new pre-application service (for all service tiers), as set out in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus, is demonstrating regard to advice. As such this should be clearly reflected in the application documents.
- The Applicant must ensure that the Programme Document (PD) is hosted and maintained on the Applicant's website.
- Timescales are high level ie "Autumn 2025", "Winter 2025", "Early 2026". These should be narrowed down to assist parties in ensuring that resources can be deployed effectively to support engagement in the project.
- The timetable of activities does not set out a draft document review by the Inspectorate. If the applicant intends to seek one, this should be added to the timetable. It should be programmed effectively, so the Inspectorate can review advanced versions of documents and sufficient time available between receipt of the Inspectorate's comments, and the date for the submission of the application, for any changes to be made, if necessary.
- It would be helpful if the PD could provide approximate timescales for project update meetings with the Inspectorate. It would also be helpful to list any future meetings with key stakeholders to enable those parties to deploy resources effectively.
- Whilst the PD understandably provides a quarter (Q1 2028) for the submission date, the Inspectorate is adding a month to the project website in order to assist external bodies with resource planning, as well as to capture data more effectively. As such, we have added "June 2026" as the submission date on the project page. This of course will be kept under review throughout the pre-application stage.