



# Inception Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	<b>Ray II Wind Farm</b>
<b>Case reference</b>	<b>EN0110031</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>The Planning Inspectorate</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>6 February 2026</b>
<b>Meeting with</b>	<b>Vattenfall</b>
<b>Venue</b>	<b>Microsoft Teams</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 (PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the inception meeting note could be delayed by up to 6 months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

## 1. The proposed development

### Detailed description of the proposed development

The proposed development is for an onshore wind farm with a generating capacity of 166MW (megawatts) and shall comprise up to twenty turbines and include a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The turbines shall have a hub height of 137m (metres) and tip height of 230m.

The proposed development site is located in Northumberland; south of Raylees and to the north of the existing Ray Wind Farm.

The applicant is currently investigating options for the cable route to allow connection to a substation. The Fourstones substation, located approximately 25 km to the southeast, is currently the preferred option although a connection agreement is not yet in place.

The project is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, as it exceeds the 100MW threshold set out in the Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) & National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

The applicant confirmed that the project shall require an Environmental Statement under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

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

- **Environmental constraints and issues**

The applicant has undertaken engagement with stakeholders, this has been predominantly with the Environment Agency, Northumberland County Council, Northumberland National Park. Historic England has been engaged on the proximity of elements of the project to listed buildings, noting 2 scheduled monuments within the proposed order limits. An email exchange has been undertaken with Natural England, although there has been no meeting as yet.

The applicant confirmed that surveys in relation to wintering birds, breeding birds, aquatic ecology and protected species (e.g badger, otter and bats) have been ongoing for several years in order to provide sufficient data to inform the environmental statement.

- **EIA scoping**

In relation to the grid route, the applicant confirmed that it was working on methodology and policy at this stage and would focus on baseline information once a selection has been made on the preferred pipeline corridors.

Following the design review milestone, the applicant expects to commence meetings with statutory consultees in Q2 of 2026 and to submit the scoping request in April 2026.

The Inspectorate advised that a meeting prior to the submission of the scoping request would be helpful and suggested this should take place in April 2026. A meeting after the scoping opinion has been issued would also be beneficial.

**Post Meeting Note:** Following the Inception Meeting it was considered by the applicant that it would be more valuable to have one meeting following the scoping process.

The Inspectorate reminded the applicant that once the order limits for the project had been defined, that it would require a shape file 10 working days in advance of the submission of the scoping request, to allow for the creation of a statutory consultee list.

- **Environmental surveys**

Requests for access to land to carry out surveys has been made to landowners and licences for surveys have been offered to some landowners for the wind farm site (not the grid route yet). In cases where this might not be possible, powers to access land under section 172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 would be sought through Defra. The applicant hopes to reach agreement with landowners in all cases, where possible.

- **Preparing the draft development consent order, including any novel approaches to drafting**

The Inspectorate advised that the applicant should work to secure protective provisions with stakeholders, for instance those who may be impacted by the heights of turbines, such as airports.

- **Land and rights: Scope of compulsory acquisition etc, powers sought and potential constraints and issues**

The applicant is in the early stages of refining the order limits and grid connection corridor. It is working with four landowners to assess the suitability of the land for the wind farm site. As the cable routing work is still underway, the number of land owners for this element is not currently known. At this point, a grid connection agreement is not yet in place.

- **Consultation (statutory and non-statutory)**

The applicant has started early engagement with statutory consultees. Consultation with key local stakeholders is anticipated to start in early 2026.

The applicant will meet with Northumberland County Council to discuss the impacts of the proposals, especially with regard to updated national policy on windfarms (National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure (EN-3)).

The applicant confirmed it was seeking to arrange a planning performance agreement with Northumberland County Council.

Statutory Consultation / Public Consultation is planned for Q4 2026.

- **Submission date**

The planned submission date for the application is April 2027.

## **2. The pre-application service offer**

- **The service tier requested by the applicant, including justification**

The applicant's preferred option is the standard tier pre-application service. The Inspectorate agreed with this selection and advised that the applicant should consider whether any of the supplementary components would be beneficial.

The standard tier allows for up to six pre-application meetings. The applicant was advised to consider at which points in its pre-application programme these meetings should be held. The Inspectorate also advised that it is useful for the applicant to identify key issues for discussion at those meetings to enable the Inspectorate to provide the applicant with helpful advice.

- **Draft documents review service**

The applicant confirmed that the use of the Inspectorate's pre-application draft document review service would be given greater consideration further into the pre-

application programme.

### **3. Practical Arrangements**

- **Confirming the pre-application tier service and invoicing**

A letter confirming the standard tier for the pre-application service will be sent to the applicant, including an invoice for this service.

The applicant shall confirm in writing when the project page should be published.

- **Project email account**

The Inspectorate confirmed that the details of a dedicated project mailbox for contacting the Inspectorate's case team will be shared with the applicant in due course.

- **Statutory instrument template access**

The applicant confirmed it has access to the template.