



Inception Meeting note

Project name	Redmere Wind Farm
Case reference	EN0110042
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date of meeting	29 June 2026
Meeting with	Meeting with Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd
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.

The proposed development

Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd (the applicant) will seek to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for a proposed onshore wind farm in England, which will comprise of up to 36 wind turbines with a maximum tip height of 200 metres, together with turbine foundations, crane hardstanding, laydown and storage areas, and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) (the proposed development). The associated development is expected to include an onsite substation, control building, meteorological mast, cabling, access routes, habitat management areas and biodiversity enhancement areas. If granted consent, the proposed development is expected to produce approximately 243 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy.

The proposed development will be located on predominantly agricultural land in East Anglia, approximately 7 km north-west of Lakenheath and 10 km north-east of Ely. The site lies within the administrative boundaries of East Cambridgeshire District Council, West Suffolk Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. The applicant explained that engagement with the main landowners is currently ongoing to progress land agreements and to inform the development of the design of the proposed development and its Order Limits.

The applicant stated that the current intention is that the proposed DCO application would not include a grid connection corridor or point of connection to the national grid. However, provisional assessments of the grid connection route options as well as discussions with National Grid and the National Energy System Operator (NESO) on a likely point of connection to the national electricity network would be undertaken out with the DCO application process and would follow any relevant regulations. Representatives of the applicant stated that they are currently tracking the progress of the application for Tween

Bridge Solar DCO application through examination and the type of issues being raised in relation to the absence of a grid connection corridor in that case. The applicant said it would review the Secretary of State's decision once available to see the approach taken to this issue and whether any conventions or precedents arise.

Post-meeting advice: where consent for elements of a proposed development (such as the grid connection) is sought separately, the applicant's attention is drawn to the relevant paragraphs in the government's Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1), namely 4.11.5 to 4.11.10:

- on the need for applicants to "liaise with National Grid" or "the relevant regional DNO or TSO to secure a grid connection"
- where applicants choose to "take a commercial risk where they have not received or accepted a formal offer of a grid connection from the relevant network operator at the time of the application", applicants "should provide information as part of their application confirming that there is no obvious reason why a network connection would not be possible"
- by setting out the aim of the Planning Act 2008 to create "a holistic planning regime so that the cumulative effect of different elements of the same project can be considered together" and wherever reasonably possible, "applications for new generating stations and related infrastructure should be contained in a single application to the Secretary of State or in separate applications submitted in tandem which have been prepared in an integrated way, as outlined in EN-5"
- where it may not be possible to coordinate applications, applicants "should include information on the other elements and explain the reasons for the separate application confirming that there are no obvious reasons for why other elements are likely to be refused"
- where this option is pursued, the applicant "accepts the implicit risks involved in doing so and must ensure they provide sufficient information to comply with the EIA Regulations including the indirect, secondary, and cumulative effects, which will encompass information on grid connections".

The Inspectorate therefore advises applicants to seek a grid connection agreement with National Grid at the earliest opportunity and before the application is submitted. Where this is not possible, applicants should demonstrate in their DCO applications that there is "no obvious reason why a network connection would not be possible". This would also apply where an applicant has a grid connection agreement in place but for other reasons, is choosing not to include the grid connection cable corridor route and substation connection point in its application.

The Inspectorate also asked the applicant to clarify arrangements for crossing a railway line that runs between the site. The applicant confirmed that the proposed connecting cables would likely pass beneath the railway line using Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). The applicant explained that the railway line is elevated and considered that this may reduce potential constraints or effects associated with such a crossing. The applicant indicated that engagement with Network Rail on its proposals and on the drafting of

protective provisions would proceed as the proposed development progresses through pre-application.

Consenting programme

The applicant confirmed that the proposed development is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development and that preparation of the Scoping Report is currently underway, with submission to the Inspectorate anticipated in late August 2026.

The applicant outlined its current pre-application activities programme, which includes refinement of the site area and connectivity requirements, progression of environmental surveys to inform the EIA process, and early engagement with statutory consultees:

NSIP Project Mobilisation	April to June 2026
Consultation with technical consultees	April 2026 to July 2027
Inception Meeting with the Inspectorate	June 2026
Submit Scoping Report to the Inspectorate	August 2026
Post-Scoping Opinion Review	October to December 2026
Consultation with Local Planning Authorities	April to June 2026 October to December 2026
Environmental Surveys: Landscape, ecology, ornithology, cultural heritage and others	April 2026 to June 2027
Design Review Milestones	July to September 2026
Phase 1 Consultation	July to December 2026
Drafting the Environmental Statement (ES)	July to December 2026
Phase 2 Consultation	January to March 2027
Finalisation of the ES	January to June 2027
DCO Document Preparation	October 2026 to June 2027
DCO Application submission (targeted timescale subject to change)	July 2027

The applicant advised that consultation with key local stakeholders is expected to commence during the summer of 2026 and that a public project launch is anticipated to coincide with the submission of the Scoping Report to the Inspectorate in August.

The applicant indicated that the current indicative programme is subject to ongoing review, with the DCO application and accompanying Environmental Statement anticipated to be submitted in Q3 2027. The applicant noted that the programme would continue to be refined as the proposed development progresses through the pre-application stage.

The Inspectorate reaffirmed the importance of the applicant maintaining and regularly updating its Issues Tracker as the proposed development progresses through pre-application. The applicant should seek to hold relevant discussions with statutory parties (where necessary) as early as possible to agree the methodology to be used and the scope of surveys and assessments needed on a topic-by-topic basis, as well as any mitigation measures required arising from potential impacts from the proposed development on designated sites and protected assets and / or sensitive receptors. This will assist the Inspectorate to understand the extent of the issues involved and degree of resolution provided by the applicant and agreements reached before the application is submitted for acceptance, and what if any specific s51 advice might be needed beforehand.

Early engagement with statutory bodies, local authorities, and other stakeholders

The applicant explained that initial engagement has commenced with the host local authorities. Introductory correspondence has been issued to East Cambridgeshire District Council, West Suffolk Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk to inform them of the proposed development and the anticipated pre-application programme, including the proposed scoping and submission timetable. The applicant advised that meetings have been arranged with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and East Cambridgeshire District Council in early July 2026. The applicant noted that a response from West Suffolk Council had not yet been received.

The applicant confirmed that engagement with key statutory consultees has also commenced. An application for Natural England's Discretionary Advice Service and Statutory Advice Service has been submitted, and a meeting with Natural England has been requested. The applicant explained that early discussions with statutory consultees will inform the scope of environmental surveys and assessments and assist in identifying any key issues at an early stage in the pre-application process.

The Inspectorate reiterated the importance of clear and effective early engagement to ensure that all interested parties, including inexperienced members of the public, are adequately informed as the project progresses. The Inspectorate highlighted as the applicant's proposed Chatteris Wind Farm is running simultaneously clear distinctions between the projects should be made.

Environmental constraints and issues

The applicant outlined the principal environmental constraints identified at this stage of the project. Key topics requiring further assessment include landscape and visual effects, peat, noise, ecology and ornithology, cultural heritage and archaeology, traffic and transport effects, and potential aviation-related constraints associated with the proximity of local airports and aviation infrastructure.

The applicant advised that aviation is a key consideration for the proposed development. The applicant also reported that autumn and winter ornithology surveys have been completed, with the survey results indicating the presence of migrating bird populations within the area.

The Inspectorate advised the applicant to identify any Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) issues early in the process and any need for derogations. The Inspectorate advised

the applicant to seek early agreement with Natural England on HRA matters and to address any areas of disagreement as quickly as possible.

Additionally, the applicant was advised to assess the degree of any effects on woodland outside the registered areas in addition to any ancient woodland, to inform the mitigation measures and / or compensation measures required to accompany an application.

On cumulative effects, the applicant was asked to explain its approach to assessment and how it intends to share with, and pool data from, other developments near to the site and how this would be shared with relevant statutory consultees for comment and approval. The applicant stated that it was currently undertaking desk-based research on the issue and would liaise with relevant consultees as its proposals mature.

In answer to a question from the Inspectorate, the applicant explained that the nearby caravan park was for temporary worker accommodation and that it plans to apply standard buffers unless further mitigation works are needed, subject to assessment.

The applicant added that a high-level assessment of potential cable corridor options is being undertaken as part of its overall approach to the grid connection and associated land requirements for any future development.

EIA scoping

It is proposed that an EIA scoping report for the project will be submitted in ~August 2026.

Environmental surveys

The applicant advised that a programme of environmental and technical surveys is currently underway or planned to inform the EIA process. Survey work includes ornithology, ecology, geology and peat, hydrology, landscape and visual assessment, forestry, noise and traffic. The applicant explained that the findings of these surveys will inform the design development, the extent of environmental assessments needed, and the identification of any mitigation measures required.

In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant confirmed that potential impacts on the River Ouse would be considered and that engagement with relevant bodies, including the Marine Management Organisation (where the operations or construction of the proposed development affect a marine management plan and/ or point at which the river is tidal), would be undertaken.

Preparing the draft development consent order

The applicant advised that preparation of the draft DCO is at an early stage. The applicant said it has experience of developing onshore wind projects in Scotland and has retained the services of a law firm with extensive experience of drafting DCOs. The applicant said that the DCO could broadly rely on the requirements and provisions applied in other consented onshore generation schemes, but that it was currently reviewing how to address the separation of the grid connection in the DCO in its review of other applicable cases. While voluntary heads of terms would be sought with landowners in the first instance, the DCO would contain compulsory acquisition powers as a fallback in line with other NSIPs.

Land and rights

The applicant explained that engagement is ongoing with six landowners whose land may be required for the proposed development. The applicant also noted that discussions may be required with additional landowners affected by turbine oversail and overrun requirements associated with the proposed construction transport routes.

The applicant confirmed that land and rights considerations, including any requirement for compulsory acquisition powers, will continue to be assessed as the project design progresses and discussions with affected land interests advance.

Consultation

The applicant advised that consultation and stakeholder engagement activities are underway in advance of the submission of the EIA Scoping Report. The applicant explained that engagement has commenced with the host local authorities, including East Cambridgeshire District Council, West Suffolk Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, alongside wider engagement with key stakeholders.

The applicant confirmed that ongoing technical engagement is taking place with key statutory consultees and regulatory bodies, including Natural England, Historic England, the Environment Agency, NATS, the Ministry of Defence and the relevant county highway authorities. The applicant explained that these discussions are intended to inform the scope of environmental surveys and assessments, identify potential constraints and agree approaches to mitigation where appropriate.

The applicant highlighted that there has been limited development of large-scale onshore wind projects in England in recent years and acknowledged that consultees may have varying levels of experience with such developments. The applicant explained that it intends to continue working proactively with local authorities, statutory consultees and the Inspectorate throughout the pre-application process to ensure key issues are identified and addressed at an early stage.

The applicant confirmed that it would clearly distinguish between the separate projects in its application and consultation materials to avoid confusion and ensure stakeholders understand the relationship between the different schemes.

Submission date

Submission of the DCO application is expected in Autumn 2027, subject to change.

The pre-application service offer

The service tier requested by the applicant

The applicant requested the basic pre-application service, based on the experience of its consultants and that it would make use of the standard Inspectorate templates to share information about the development of its pre-application consultation and engagement activities and to denote the preparedness of the application before submission. The applicant did not identify any project-specific risks or anticipated change requests at this stage.

The Inspectorate advised that keeping abreast of the evolving policy landscape and legislative changes, made DCOs on equivalent applications, and addressing issues identified through the scoping process, would help to reduce the number of Examining Authority questions and support a more efficient examination.

Primary service features (and availability of templates)

The applicant confirmed that an Issues Tracker will be prepared following the Inspectorate's template and provided in time for the first Project Update Meeting. It will be informed by consultee discussions and ongoing environmental assessments and will ultimately form the list of Potential Main Issues for examination submitted with the DCO application.

Risks, including change requests

The applicant confirmed that no project risks have been identified at this early stage, and the Risks section of the Programme Document will be updated as any risks emerge.

The Inspectorate advised that, to achieve an efficient examination process, the applicant should seek to resolve, as far as reasonably possible, the main issues arising from the proposed development. This will reduce the number and significance of unresolved issues emerging in the consenting process as well as the need for change requests.

Feedback on the applicant's initial Programme Document (post meeting note)

The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its initial Programme Document before the inception meeting in line with our request under the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus.

Having reviewed the document, the Inspectorate considers that it covers the majority of the expected content as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10. In particular, the Programme Document provides a sound summary of the proposed development, its pre-application timetable, list of consultees, and the risks the applicant has identified and how these will be tracked and managed.

However, the applicant should refer to and follow the template for the Programme Document as attached to the Pre-application Prospectus (as the draft version is currently set out like a PowerPoint Presentation). While the applicant has outlined a set of main issues for resolution, it would be helpful if this was presented in a table format, to also include the activities needed to resolve them. It would be helpful if the applicant could also provide some detail as to the significant cultural heritage assets on or near the site as well as any significant landscape features in its 'main issues section' that may require specific assessment and mitigation, alongside the ecological designations. Further detail on these main issues, including the applicant's progress with agreeing its methodology and scope of surveys, assessments and mitigation needed, with relevant statutory parties, will be captured in the applicant's Issues Tracker, to record the progress made with resolving these issues during the pre-application stage.

Lastly, the applicant will need to explain how it intends to carry out its consultation and engagement activities in its Programme Document. Though the Inspectorate understands that the applicant may be waiting for the government's updated pre-application guidance following the implementation of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, before completing this section.

Annex A

Meeting attendees

Organisation	Role
Planning Inspectorate	Case Officer, National Infrastructure Team
Planning Inspectorate	Case Officer, National Infrastructure Team
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Manager, National Infrastructure Team
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Lead, National Infrastructure Team
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Lead, Environmental Services Team
Planning Inspectorate	Case Manager, National Infrastructure Team
Planning Inspectorate	Senior Environmental Advisor
Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd	Lead Project Development Manager
ERM	Chartered Planner
TLT	Solicitor
Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd	Junior Project Manager
ERM	Project Manager & Planning Lead
ERM	Project Stakeholder and Consultation Lead