



# Inception Meeting note

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|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Project name</b>    | <b>Everton Carr Wind Farm</b>                 |
| <b>Case reference</b>  | <b>EN0110043</b>                              |
| <b>Status</b>          | <b>Final</b>                                  |
| <b>Author</b>          | <b>The Planning Inspectorate</b>              |
| <b>Date of meeting</b> | <b>16 July 2026</b>                           |
| <b>Meeting with</b>    | <b>Meeting with Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd</b> |
| <b>Venue</b>           | <b>Microsoft Teams</b>                        |
| <b>Circulation</b>     | <b>All attendees</b>                          |

## 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) is developing a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for a proposed new onshore wind farm, comprising of a wind farm area for the siting of approximately 16 turbines with a height of approximately 220 metres (to blade tip), together with an onsite substation and associated infrastructure, a haul route search area for construction and maintenance vehicles, access works and potential alterations to the local road network (the proposed development). If consented, the proposed development will generate in the region of 112 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy and is expected to connect to the national electricity network at National Grid's 'West Burton Substation' (located 13 km to the southeast of the main windfarm site).

The applicant said that it was currently undertaking work to define the grid connection corridor, which would be assessed as part of the Environmental Statement to accompany the DCO application. The applicant advised that it had requested a feasibility assessment from National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) to identify a suitable point of connection to the electricity transmission network, with a response from NGED expected in August 2026.

The development site is to be situated on approximately 775 hectares of mostly flat arable land near the village of Misson, c.15 km to the southeast of Doncaster and c.8 km to the northwest of Gainsborough in the administrative area of Bassetlaw District Council, in the County of Nottinghamshire. The site is said to be owned by one landowner, with the potential for the existing organic farming activities to continue once the proposed development has been constructed. An approximately 30m tall existing onshore wind turbine is located immediately outside of the draft Order Limits, as well as a small 400 kW (0.4 MW) floating solar array farm (developed in 2015).

## **Consenting programme**

The applicant provided its initial programme timetable for the pre-application stage:

- Bird Surveys – January 2026 to May 2027
- Baseline Surveys – January to October 2026
- Inception Meeting with the Inspectorate – July 2026
- Scoping Report to the Inspectorate – September 2026
- Stage 1 Consultation – September to October 2026
- Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion – October 2026
- Development of the Environmental Impact Assessment – October 2026 to October 2027
- Stage 2 Consultation – January to February 2027
- DCO application submission to the Inspectorate – Q4 2027

The applicant advised that it is currently seeking to progress the design of the proposed development towards a design chill in September 2026, following the completion of the first phase of environmental surveys and associated survey data to inform the project parameters.

## **Engagement with statutory bodies, local authorities, and other stakeholders**

The applicant explained that its consultation strategy would follow established good practice and the Gunning Principles in carrying out engagement with stakeholders to obtain early feedback on the project's design and in framing the main issues. The applicant said it was also reviewing and taking account of the government's new guidance on the pre-application stage in relation to consultation, and in light of the changes to primary legislation by the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 coming into force on 24 July 2026.

The applicant said it intends to employ a range of online and in-person communication methods to set out its proposals and early design masterplans for comment, including the holding of dedicated briefings, workshops and potentially evidence plans with prescribed consultees, host authorities and neighbouring authorities to obtain early feedback on technical aspects of the proposed development. While community newsletters / local press adverts, a project website, and meetings with residents and community groups were also being considered to share relevant information and to identify any opportunities, risks and issues relevant to the local community in respect of the proposed development and the identification of impacts on any sensitive receptors.

In answer to questions from the Inspectorate in respect of aviation, the applicant said that any likely significant effects on civil and military aviation sites (such as the planned airport near Doncaster) should be capable of being mitigated through the distances between the proposed development and licensed and unlicensed aerodromes, as well as the orientation of the turbines in relation to radar and navigation systems, safeguarding landing sites and flightpaths. A comprehensive aviation safeguarding assessment would be undertaken in accordance with CAP738, CAP764 and other relevant Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidance, the applicant added, in addition to carrying out technical consultation with National Air Traffic Services (NATS), the Ministry of Defence, relevant airport operators and the Met Office on safeguarding matters.

The Inspectorate enquired about access arrangements across the site and whether there are any Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within or around the proposed development area. In response, the applicant advised that a public highway passes through the site broadly on a south-east to north-west alignment. The applicant explained that the remainder of the access network within the site comprises unpaved tracks which are maintained by the landowner and are not adopted by the local highway authority.

The Inspectorate noted the presence of a nearby equestrian centre and queried whether bridleways cross the site and how equestrian users would be considered within the consultation process. The applicant confirmed that a bridleway runs across the site on a west to east alignment and advised that equestrian interests would be considered within the consultation strategy. The applicant assured the Inspectorate that relevant user groups and affected parties would be included within the consultation programme.

The Inspectorate advised that the consultation strategy outlined by the applicant appeared broadly consistent with current expectations regarding pre-application consultation under planning reforms. The Inspectorate advised that it would be beneficial to continue to discuss the applicant's engagement activities as the project progresses and how outcomes may be reported within the application documentation, in absence of requirements for a consultation report. The Inspectorate said the recent changes to guidance should provide applicants with greater flexibility during the pre-application stage to undertake consultation at a scale and nature appropriate to the complexity and scope of the proposed development. The Inspectorate noted that the government's guidance now places greater emphasis on the identification (and resolution where feasible) of key issues at pre-application and how these should be tracked and managed through to examination.

## **Environmental constraints and issues**

The applicant provided an overview of the principal environmental and technical constraints identified to date and its planned activities to reach resolutions with technical statutory consultees.

Potential areas of peat have been identified on the site from the applicant's review of the England Peat Map, with some areas of relatively deep peat of up to 1.5m identified and some protected fen peat deposits. Following walkover surveys and Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessments, the applicant said that it would be undertaking a phase 1 peat survey at 50-100m grid spacing. The findings of this survey would be used to enable peat-related impacts to be reduced through the proposed development's design. The applicant

added that it would be holding consultation with Natural England to explore any further mitigation measures that might be required.

The applicant also advised that the flat and open nature of the surrounding landscape presents a potential landscape and visual constraint, owing to the height of the turbines potentially having effects on long-distance views and recreational routes. The applicant said that it would be taking landscape and visual receptors into account to inform the design, as part of EIA, in order to reduce potential significant effects on nearby residential receptors and the magnitude of effects on visual amenity.

As the site is located within Flood Zone 3, the Inspectorate asked how the applicant had carried out its site selection given the requirement to pass the 'sequential test' and 'exception test' in respect of essential infrastructure. The Inspectorate also queried the site selection considering the presence of peat on site. The applicant said it would be carrying out all necessary technical consultation with the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority and Internal Drainage Board on its methodology, use of flood model data, and approach to its flood risk assessment as well as using consultee feedback to inform the design of the proposed development (where applicable) to prevent increases in flood risk at the site or diverting flood risk to nearby areas. However, the applicant advised that the presence of embanked sections of the River Idle may provide opportunities for peatland restoration where peat resources are present within the site. The applicant further advised that the character and functioning of the site are strongly influenced by its location within the active floodplain of the River Idle and by the extensive engineered water management systems associated with the river and its washlands.

The Inspectorate was also informed that bird surveys are expected to continue throughout 2026 owing to the number of bird species of conservation concern in the area. These detailed ornithological surveys would help establish a robust ecological baseline, the applicant added, to inform turbine layout to reduce the risk to sensitive species, as far as possible, as well as exploring mitigation measures in its discussions with prescribed consultees. In answer to the Inspectorate question, the applicant said that a 20km assessment area was being used to determine any functionally linked land, which is not known at this stage but would form part of its Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) screening.

In relation to cultural heritage, the applicant advised that there are no designated heritage assets within the site itself. However, there are scheduled monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas within the wider area, together with heritage records located within the site boundary. The applicant explained that further assessment and consultation with Bassetlaw District Council Conservation and Heritage Officers and Historic England will be undertaken to understand potential direct and indirect effects on heritage assets and their settings.

The applicant also advised that there is potential for unexploded ordnance (UXO) given the site's proximity to a former RAF bombing range (RAF Misson) that was active between 1934 to 1958. A desk-based assessment has already been undertaken, with the potential for further investigations needed in accordance with CIRIA C681 if areas of potential UXO Risk is identified. In answer to a question from the Inspectorate, the applicant envisaged that further surveys could be required before and after development consent.

The applicant advised that operational noise and effects on residential amenity will require careful consideration due to the presence of nearby properties, which will be assessed and mitigated, if required.

The applicant further advised that ground conditions represent a potential constraint due to the potential presence of soft superficial deposits, historical mineral extraction activity and the site's location within a Mineral Safeguarding Area for sand and gravel. The Inspectorate was informed that geotechnical, geoenvironmental and mineral resource assessments will be undertaken to inform the design and assessment process.

The applicant provided an outline of its plans for construction access and advised that transport assessments are being undertaken to identify suitable routes for construction traffic and abnormal indivisible loads. The applicant explained that, where practicable, existing bridges crossing the site's drainage network and watercourses would be utilised and strengthened to accommodate construction traffic. The applicant noted that new crossings may be required in some locations; however, these would be kept to the minimum necessary to facilitate construction and operation of the proposed development. The Inspectorate was informed that further work is ongoing to assess routeing requirements, highway impacts and any associated mitigation measures.

## **EIA scoping**

The Inspectorate queried how cumulative effects would be assessed and reported, noting that a dedicated cumulative effects document was not identified within the planned EIA scoping report. In response, the applicant advised that cumulative effects would be addressed within a dedicated chapter of the Environmental Statement. The applicant further explained that the EIA approach chapter will include a section setting out the approach to cumulative effects assessment.

The applicant intends to submit its scoping request to the Inspectorate towards the end of September 2026.

## **Environmental surveys**

In relation to archaeology and cultural heritage, the applicant advised that desk-based deposit modelling is proposed in place of a site walkover and will be used alongside a Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment to identify archaeological potential and inform any necessary mitigation. The applicant advised that setting assessments would be undertaken where heritage assets have intervisibility with the proposed development and where setting contributes to their significance.

The applicant advised that a programme of ecological surveys has been undertaken or is planned throughout 2026, including habitat, biodiversity net gain, bat, great crested newt, otter and water vole surveys.

In relation to ornithology, the applicant advised that extensive bird surveys have been undertaken since 2025, including flight activity, breeding bird, wintering bird and nocturnal surveys. The Inspectorate was informed that a second year of surveys is planned throughout 2026 and 2027 to support the assessment of potential impacts on bird species.

The applicant advised that further ground investigation work is planned, including a Preliminary Land Quality Risk Assessment, peat surveys and a peatland condition assessment. The Inspectorate was informed that hydrological walkover surveys are also proposed to verify desk study findings and identify site-specific water environment constraints.

The applicant advised that baseline noise monitoring is scheduled for late 2026 to inform the assessment of operational effects on nearby receptors.

The applicant further advised that socio-economic, tourism, human health, air quality and climate change assessments will principally comprise detailed desk-based studies, supported by site visits and stakeholder engagement where appropriate. No specific field surveys are currently proposed for air quality or climate change assessments.

### **Preparing the draft development consent order**

The applicant advised that preparation of the draft Development Consent Order (DCO) and Explanatory Memorandum will be led by its legal advisers, who have extensive experience of the DCO process and would be using precedents in made DCOs for similar onshore generation projects as well as employing standard drafting where feasible. The Inspectorate was informed that the approach to the inclusion of the grid connection within the application remains under consideration at this time and may evolve as the project progresses.

### **Land and rights**

The applicant provided an update on land ownership and land rights matters and advised that the main turbine array area within the proposed scoping boundary is under the control of a single landowner. The Inspectorate was informed that the landowner is supportive of the proposed development in principle. The applicant would be seeking to negotiate land rights via an option and lease, but would seek compulsory acquisition powers in its DCO as is a standard approach for many nationally significant infrastructure projects.

The applicant further advised that access arrangements for the delivery of turbine components and other construction materials remain under consideration. The Inspectorate was informed that temporary crossings and oversailing rights may be required along delivery routes, although the precise requirements have not yet been established.

In relation to the grid connection, the applicant advised that the final route and consenting approach remain at an early stage of development. The Inspectorate was informed that compulsory acquisition powers may be required for elements of the grid connection infrastructure if the grid connection is included with the DCO application. However, this will be subject to ongoing investigation and design development.

### **Submission date**

The applicant informed the Inspectorate that the current anticipated submission for the DCO application is in Q4 2027.

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

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

The applicant stated that it considers the basic level of service would be sufficient, given the experience of the project team and its lawyer. It is not anticipated that novel requirements would be needed and had confidence that any significant effects could be mitigated.

### **Risks, including change requests**

The applicant identified some key project risks and its approach to how these would be managed. The applicant advised that technical and design challenges could affect the programme as environmental, engineering and technical assessments continue to inform the evolution of the proposed development. The applicant also highlighted the potential for changes to national and local planning policy to influence the project as it progresses through the pre-application stage. The Inspectorate was informed that policy developments will be monitored throughout the project lifecycle to ensure the proposal remains aligned with relevant requirements.

The applicant further noted that planned local government reorganisation, including the replacement of Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council with a new unitary authority, could affect engagement with local authorities during the pre-application process. The applicant advised that regular communication with the relevant authorities will be maintained to minimise any potential disruption arising from the transition.

## **Feedback on the applicant's initial Programme Document (post-meeting advice)**

The applicant provided the Inspectorate with a copy of its initial Programme Document. The Inspectorate considers that the document meets all of the expected content as set out in the government's current guidance on the pre-application stage at paragraph 10, as well as the template to be used in the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. The Inspectorate considers that it is a very helpful document that clearly sets out the applicant's approach to its planned consultation activities, the description of the development, the identification of risks and how these will be managed. In particular, the applicant has provided a clear and comprehensive set of potential main issues and the activity it intends to undertake to reach a resolution on each topic.