



Inception Meeting note

Project name	Dengie Peninsula Energy Park
Case reference	EN0110046
Status	FINAL
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date of meeting	17 August 2026
Meeting with	Meeting with Dengie Peninsula Energy Park
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 the Find a National Infrastructure Project website.

Any section 51 advice given in connection with the application during the meeting would be duplicated in a Section 51 Advice log. The s51 Advice Log would be updated with all s51 advice given in connection with the application to the applicant, and others, during the pre-application stage. The applicant is requested to use the s51 Advice Log to demonstrate regard to the advice given in connection with the application to it, and others, during the pre-application stage.

Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which the applicant, 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.

The Inspectorate advised that any s51 advice given is not legal advice which the applicant can rely on and any information provided is subject to disclosure under FOI as per the security and protection of information policy.

1. The proposed development

Detailed description of the proposed development

The applicant, Dengie Peninsula Energy Park, explained it is a subsidiary of Low Carbon Limited. The proposed solar farm is located in the district of Maldon, Essex, with the main sites to be located north-east and south of the village of Bradwell-on-Sea and east of the village of Burnham-on-Crouch.

The energy generation is in excess of 100 megawatts and therefore considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.

The point of connection is currently under discussion with National Grid. The applicant is assessing both overground and underground cabling options, however, there is a connection offer at National Grid in Rayleigh. For overground options it is assessing whether existing cabling from Bradwell Power Station can be used or whether new cabling is required. The proposed development is planned to be operational for 40 years after which a decommissioning plan would be implemented to restore the land to its original use/condition.

Development consent will be sought for the construction, operation (including maintenance), and decommissioning of a ground mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating station along with other associated development and ancillary works which includes:

- a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS);
- access tracks for maintenance
- security fencing and CCTV;
- landscaping and ecological mitigation
- grid connection infrastructure and;
- other infrastructure integral to the development

Indicative Site Boundary

The main site area is approximately 2000 hectares of land which is subject to change as landowner engagements progress.

The proposed solar array areas would be linked to each other via Inter-Array Cable Route Corridors and to the Point of Connection via a Grid Cable Route Corridor. The Inter-Array Cable Route Corridors would be underground cables or overhead lines (both options being considered currently). The applicant is carrying out surveys and other planning processes to establish land use across the site

Constraints and opportunities

The Inspectorate enquired about other potential developments in the area. The applicant confirmed it is aware of other proposed developments in the area and will be monitoring these. It also indicated the existing wind turbines in close proximity to the proposed development and many listed buildings in the area.

The applicant is assessing whether to use an existing marine transfer facility to transport development components via boat at the south side of the peninsula.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping

The applicant plans to submit EIA scoping in October 2026. It is anticipated that scoping will cover the various options of cable routes. It is hoped that preferred options will be identified before the application is submitted, currently planned for October 2027. The

applicant will consider whether the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) need to be consulted once scoping is complete. If consultation with the MMO is required and occurs post-scoping, the applicant should include evidence of dialogue to agree the scope of the relevant elements of the impact assessment, in the Environmental Statement.

The applicant is considering both centralised and separate battery storage options.

The Inspectorate asked the applicant to ensure any changes to the anticipated submission of the Scoping Report be communicated as soon as practicable along with any other changes and updates to ensure the best service can be provided. The applicant confirmed that a firm date will be communicated.

The Inspectorate reminded the applicant of the requirement to provide a GIS Shapefile at least 10 working days before the submission of the Scoping Report in accordance with our published advice.

Environmental surveys

The applicant confirmed environmental survey work is ongoing. This includes ecological surveys and desk study information gathering. Geophysical survey of the main site areas has commenced. The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this survey has been shared with Place Services which are the environmental advisors to Essex County Council.

The applicant confirmed it has contacted Natural England to start discussions regarding mitigation options and the scope of the surveys. This includes bird surveys and other species surveys as well as soil surveys to confirm the classification of agricultural land quality. Habitat surveys will demonstrate where habitats can be enhanced/protected. The applicant also confirmed it would include any intertidal zones within the Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). It was confirmed that Grade 3a and 3b land are mostly present in the area. The applicant has met with the Environment Agency to discuss the flood risk assessment including flood modelling given the flood risk context.

The Inspectorate asked whether coastal access routes will be impacted. The applicant's landscape team is currently assessing landscape and visual impacts which includes coastal access. This is considered a key consideration.

The applicant confirmed that the accidents and disasters section of the Environmental Statement will look at any risks caused by droughts. It is expected to be a management issue and will be considered (as relevant) within management plans submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The applicant will be developing an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan, to be submitted with the DCO application, which will consider fire risks.

Liaison with LPAs and statutory environmental bodies and the programme document

Meetings with the Environment Agency regarding flood modelling have already occurred and the applicant has contacted Natural England to set up discretionary and statutory advice agreements. The applicant held introductory meetings with Essex County Council, Rochford District Council and Chelmsford District Council. It is yet to meet Maldon District

Council and Basildon Council. A draft programme document has been prepared and will be shared once the project is made public in October 2026.

It was noted that Rochford is due to issue an updated Local Development Plan imminently. All other local authorities (LAs) currently have no known plans to do so.

Pre-application phase programme

Figure 1

Stage	Activity	Anticipated Date
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping	Submission of EIA scoping report to Planning Inspectorate	October 2026
	EIA scoping opinion received	December 2026
Ongoing engagement	Engagement with host authorities and selected statutory bodies	May 2026 to October 2027
Formal Consultation Period	Consultation stage for general public, land interests and other statutory/non statutory bodies	February 2027 to March 2027
Preparation of DCO application	Preparation of the Environmental Statement	April to September 2027
	Preparation of other supporting application documents and plans	July to September 2027
DCO Application Submission	Submission of the DCO Application to the Planning Inspectorate	October 2027

The Inspectorate advised the applicant to consider when future pre-application meetings would be most useful.

Engagement and consultation strategy

The applicant is aware that there is no longer a statutory requirement to undertake consultation in accordance with s42 to 45, 47 and 49 (Section 46/48 remaining) of The Planning Act 2008 with respect to:

- Statutory Consultation
- Consultation Report (having regard to)
- Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

Given the above, the applicant proposed it would ensure early and ongoing engagement with stakeholders to enable an open and transparent consultation which is appropriate and timely.

Draft DCO, Land and rights: Scope of compulsory acquisition etc powers sought and potential constraints and issues

The applicant highlighted that various options are being considered. The Inspectorate advised that if they are seeking compulsory acquisition, it would be useful for the Inspectorate to be kept informed of any developments including the number of landowners

impacted. In addition, if anything unique or novel in respect of drafting the dDCO it would be useful for the Inspectorate to be informed so advice can be provided. The applicant clarified that the majority of the main site plots have been obtained through private agreements with a few ongoing conversations still developing.

The Inspectorate also requested to be notified when options have been selected in relation to the cable corridors as the scheme develops.

The Inspectorate advised that it is important to maintain an Issues Tracker / Land Rights Tracker. It is expected that this be submitted regularly to allow the Inspectorate to allocate resources accordingly. The applicant does not need to wait for a project update meeting to provide a revised tracker. The Inspectorate will provide advice on the Issues Tracker where necessary. The applicant enquired as to the format of the issues tracker and whether this is flexible to allow for individual issues trackers for each stakeholder rather than a combined tracker. The Inspectorate confirmed it would provide advice after the meeting.

The applicant stated there is currently no crown land that has been identified; however, this will continue to be analysed and be confirmed in September.

Proposed Submission date

The applicant anticipates submitting the DCO application in October 2027. A precise date will be provided in due course.

2. The pre-application service offer

The service tier requested by the applicant, including justification

The applicant advised that it proposes to proceed with the basic level of pre-application service offered by the Inspectorate. In support of this approach, the applicant noted that the project is being promoted by an experienced developer and project team and is being formulated within the framework of designated National Policy Statements. The Inspectorate confirmed that a tier confirmation letter will be issued, including details of the project reference code and dedicated project email address.

The Inspectorate provided advice on the service level tiers, the process for changing service level tiers and the invoicing process in accordance with the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus.

The applicant was reminded that it is beneficial for the Inspectorate to receive any specific questions ahead of pre-application meetings.

- **Draft documents review service**

N/A

Updates to project information for ['Find a National Infrastructure Project'](#)

The applicant will notify the Inspectorate when they wish for the project website to go live along with the Inception Meeting note being published. The Inspectorate asked that any updates to submission dates should be communicated to the Inspectorate with confirmation that it can be published.

The red line boundary (RLB) will be updated at scoping and acceptance, but changes should be communicated with the Inspectorate to ensure the correct GIS shapefile is uploaded and therefore displays the accurate RLB.

Project email account

The Inspectorate advised that the email account has been created and will be shared with the applicant separately with further details. It was advised that all correspondence should be sent to this mailbox to ensure timely responses from the Case Team.

3. Next steps

Project update meetings to be confirmed.

4. AOB

The following actions were agreed:

- Invitation for next meeting.
- Further advice on whether there can be individual issues trackers for each stakeholder rather than a combined tracker.

Post Meeting Note

The applicant confirmed it has now met with Maldon Council on 8 September 2026.

Annex A

Meeting attendees

Organisation	Role
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Lead
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Manager
Planning Inspectorate	Case Manager
Planning Inspectorate	Case Officer
Planning Inspectorate	Case Officer
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Lead – Environmental Services Team
Planning Inspectorate	Advisor - Environmental Services Team
Dengie Peninsula Energy Park	Senior DCO Manager – Low Carbon
Dengie Peninsula Energy Park	EIA Lead - AECOM
Dengie Peninsula Energy Park	Planning Lead – AECOM
Dengie Peninsula Energy Park	Senior Stakeholder Manager – Low Carbon
Dengie Peninsula Energy Park	DCO Lead– AECOM