

EN020033

LionLink Interconnector

Section 51 Advice Log

Version: 07 April 2025

There is a statutory duty under ['section 51 \(s51\) of the Planning Act 2008'](#) for The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to record the advice that it gives in relation to an application or potential application, and to make this publicly available.

This document comprises a record of the advice that has been provided by The Planning Inspectorate to the applicant and their consultants during the pre-application stage. It will be updated by The Planning Inspectorate after every interaction with the applicant during which s51 has been provided. The applicant will always be given the opportunity to comment on The Planning Inspectorate's draft record of advice before it is published.

The applicant will use this advice log as the basis for demonstrating regard to s51 advice within the application.

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Date of meeting	Meeting overview
7 April 2025	Project Update Meeting (PUM)

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Topic	Meeting date: 7 April 2025
Flood Risk and Environment Agency Data	<p>PINS advised the applicant that the Environment Agency (EA) has published new flood risk and coastal erosion data in March 2025, and that the applicant's assessment work should take account of new data as and when it is published. The EA has written to applicants and copied PINS, setting out its expectations for how the updated data should be considered. PINS highlighted that the EA is expected to continue making regular updates to this data, so the applicant should keep an eye on these and reflect them in the assessment work accordingly.</p>
Post-scoping updates: Cumulative Effects with Other Projects	<p>The applicant stated that there are 3 developments listed in the Scoping Opinion which it does not consider need to be assessed for cumulative effects in the environmental statement (ES) as there is no geographical overlap of the zones of influence (Zol). These projects are North Falls and Five Estuaries offshore windfarms, and Nautilus Interconnector.</p> <p>PINS advised that whilst the Scoping Opinion cannot be changed, the applicant may seek to agree with relevant consultation bodies such as the local authorities, and other statutory consultation bodies as relevant to the ES aspect, that developments can be scoped out of the cumulative assessment where it can be demonstrated that significant effects are not likely to occur. PINS advised that this should be evidenced in the ES.</p>
Post-scoping updates: Options and Scenarios	<p>The applicant updated on the approach to the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) with two scenarios for the substation (amendment and build out), options for the High Voltage Alternating Current (HVAC) cable route (two options) and options for the High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) cable route (two options aligned with other project interfaces).</p> <p>As above, PINS advised that it was open to the applicant to do so with agreement from relevant statutory consultation bodies and this approach should be evidenced in the ES.</p>
Post-scoping updates: Pakefield to East Bavents Site of Special	<p>The applicant stated that its preferred landfall location at Walberswick means that Pakefield to East Bavents SSSI would be avoided as this was aligned with the landfall option at Southwold. It is proposing to scope out assessment of impacts to the SSSI from the ES on that basis. As above,</p>

Scientific Interest (SSSI)	PINS advised that it was open to the applicant to do so with agreement from relevant statutory consultation bodies and this approach should be evidenced in the ES.
Post-scoping updates: Order Limit Extension	<p>The applicant advised of the extension of the project boundary to accommodate overhead line works (close to the substation) and to accommodate an alternative access over the Fromus River (to the Converter Station) and offshore associated with an area of aggregate abstraction.</p> <p>As above, PINS advised that it was open to the applicant to do so with agreement from relevant statutory consultation bodies and this approach should be evidenced in the ES.</p>
Programme Documents and Issue Resolution	<p>PINS advised that if there is no update to the applicant's programme there is no need to update the PD. Instead, PINS advised that where change occurs e.g. Issues identified early in the process get resolved during pre-application, these should be noted as a "benchmark" so this can be cross-referenced through the applicant's application documents. This progression should be reflected in the PD to demonstrate resolution of matters prior to submission. The PD should also highlight in advance any need for PUMs, multi-party meetings and Agendas should be issued well in advance.</p>
Engagement with Local Action Groups	<p>PINS advised the applicant to consider engagement with local action groups e.g. Substation Action Save East Suffolk (SASES). The applicant noted they had not undertaken specific engagement with such groups to date and PINS advised that they should consider early engagement with these groups and to mitigate any concerns (if possible) so as to limit possible issues being raised/examined, should the application be considered for Examination. While it may not be possible to minimise all issues, engaging with these groups could help minimise any potential concerns.</p>
Natural England and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)	<p>Following its appraisal process, the applicant has identified Walberswick as the preferred landfall location, as it would require a shorter cable route and have reduced environmental impacts compared to the Southwold option. Whilst it would result in the cable crossing through Minsmere-Walberswick Special Protection Area (SPA) the applicant confirmed that a trenchless crossing technique such as horizontal directional drilling (HDD) is proposed to avoid direct habitat loss. There may be other construction phase impacts which will be identified and assessed as part of the</p>

	EIA and evidenced within the ES. The applicant confirmed that they are continuing engagement with Natural England (NE) about the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and would be undertaking an evidence plan process (EPP). PINS requested the applicant to provide progress updates in future project meetings, including NE's position on whether there would be adverse effects on integrity of the European sites and the need for a derogations' case and compensatory measures.
Protected Landscapes and DEFRA Guidance	PINS advised the applicant that new guidance was published by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in December 2024 regarding the amended duty in respect of functions that affect Protected Landscapes, including National Landscapes, under s85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CRoW Act) introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA). This guidance may have implications for the applicant's assessment work in respect of the Suffolk and Essex Coast & Heaths National Landscape and should be considered in the ES. The guidance is available at the following link: Guidance for relevant authorities on seeking to further the purposes of Protected Landscapes - GOV.UK .
Land Rights Tracker	PINS advised the applicant to maintain a proper land rights tracker that does not simply remove resolved land parcels. Instead, the tracker should keep a record of what land was initially affected and how it was resolved. PINS noted that issues resolved during the pre-application stage, might possibly be discussed during an examination due to minimal evidence being reflected via application documents and therefore maintaining a record and ensuring accurate information is provided might mitigate the need to examine such matters.
Project Presentation Request	PINS requested that the applicant provide a short presentation in the next PUM, to explain the scheme and proposed operation, including any visuals. PINS also advised that any updated programme document should be provided at least 2 weeks in advance of any PUM.
Topic	Meeting date: DD Month YYYY
Topic	Advice given
