



Inception Meeting note

Project name	East Irish Sea Transmission Project
Case reference	EN0210008
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date of meeting	17 June 2025
Meeting with	Ørsted East Irish Sea Transmission Limited
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 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, if requested by an applicant for commercial reasons.

1. The proposed development

A Development Consent Order (DCO) will be sought by Ørsted East Irish Sea Transmission Limited (the applicant) for the East Irish Sea Transmission Project. This project accompanies the Mooir Vannin Generation Project within the Isle of Man territorial waters and comprises of infrastructure to bring power from the Mooir Vannin Generation Project to the UK.

The Mooir Vannin Generation Project is promoted by Mooir Vannin Offshore Wind Farm Limited (MVOWFL) to develop the Isle of Man's first offshore wind farm. A Marine Infrastructure Consent (MIC) Order is being pursued under the Marine Infrastructure Management Act (MIMA) 2016. That application was submitted in March 2025, however, the initial assessment of the application by the Department of Infrastructure demonstrated that the existing Marine Infrastructure (Consenting Process) Regulations 2024 are worded in a way that any proposed controlled marine activity would struggle to be accepted for examination. MVOWFL has been informed that the Department of Infrastructure are intending to make amendments to the Marine Infrastructure (Consenting Process) Regulations 2024 which will bring the requirements in line with the latest approaches that other jurisdictions take to marine infrastructure planning. The application will be resubmitted in July, and a decision is anticipated in 2026.

The East Irish Sea Transmission project consists of up to four Offshore Export Cables and 12 Onshore Export Cables (in four circuits), up to three Offshore Booster Stations, an Onshore Booster Station, an Onshore Substation and Electrical Balancing Infrastructure (EBI). This would transfer approximately 1.4 gigawatts (GW) of power from the Moor Vannin Generation Project to Penwortham, Lancashire, where a grid connection agreement has been made with National Grid. The applicant is currently considering two cable routes, one northern and one southern, but this will be refined to one post-EIA scoping. An additional route from Blackpool was previously considered but has been deselected for scoping due to a range of reasons including potential interactions with environmental designations and other infrastructure. Further information will be provided in the applicants Scoping Report due to be published in August 2025.

The Inspectorate asked whether consideration has been given to the possibility of following the onshore route being proposed by the applicants for the Morgan and Morecombe Offshore Wind Farm Transmission Assets project to minimise disruption in the area during the construction periods. The applicant confirmed that engagement is ongoing with the applicants for the proposed Morgan and Morecambe Offshore Wind Farms Transmission Assets project, but collaboration is not considered to be viable, and as such, that option has been discounted. The Inspectorate advised that the applicant highlights this during scoping and consultation to clearly explain why this approach has not been pursued.

The project was granted a Section 35 Direction from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) on 17 October 2024.

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

The applicant has contacted and held meetings with all local planning authorities. At present, there are six local authorities within the scoping boundary, but this number will reduce once cable route options are refined. These authorities have been provided with the applicant's local consultation approach to obtain feedback. This feedback will evolve into the foundation of its Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The applicant has also pre-emptively engaged with Lancashire County Council due to upcoming changes to unitary authority's powers.

The applicant is currently closely engaging with fishers in the impacted area and is conducting ongoing meetings to establish relations. This is due to the applicant needing to remove fishing gear to conduct its geophysical surveys from July 2025.

The applicant is consulting Natural England (NE) regarding assessment methodologies following advice provided in July 2024 for onshore ornithology surveys. The proposed methodologies reflect the nature of the project being transmission assets only. The Inspectorate noted that the Examining Authority may ask the applicant to conduct assessments using NE's methodologies.

The Inspectorate stated that within the new pre-application service, the applicant is required to demonstrate regard to any section 51 advice the Inspectorate issues. If the applicant believes that advice is not applicable, the Inspectorate asked the applicant to clearly document its methodological approach and reasoning for diverging from advice given.

EIA scoping and Evidence Plan Process

The applicant confirmed it anticipates submitting a scoping request on 13 August 2025. The Inspectorate advised that the shape file will need to be received 10 working days before and, if using a file sharing site, it may be useful to do a trial run with this. The Inspectorate also asked the applicant to keep it updated if there were to be delays to allow scoping to be adequately resourced.

The Inspectorate noted the non-statutory consultation would overlap with scoping. The Inspectorate advised against this because it could create confusion for stakeholders. It also emphasised the importance of the applicant reminding individuals that they cannot directly respond to the Inspectorate unless the Inspectorate had consulted with them directly for comments on the scoping report.

The applicant sought advice on the impact of changes to the Planning Reform Bill. The Inspectorate advised that it was unsure if the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) would be removed and that its working with government to understand the Bills practicalities. It reassured the applicant that it would provide advice to projects that may be impacted once more information is known. The applicant stated that within the MIMA the PEIR was optional and had opted not to complete it. Alternatively, the applicant elected to conduct risk management exercises which the relevant stakeholders were content with. The Inspectorate emphasised the importance of good dialogue with the local community and landowners to reach land agreements and to minimise the risk of new issues being raised after the submission of the application.

The Inspectorate queried if scoping could be delayed until one cable route remained. It advised that this would maximise the scoping's effectiveness by allowing focused responses from the Inspectorate and other consultation bodies. The applicant explained that this decision will be informed by technical considerations, environmental constraints analysis, the scoping opinion and landowner and local community feedback which will likely not be completed until Q4 2025 so two cable routes must be scoped. The applicant will inform all stakeholders of the results of the deselection process in Q4 2025.

The applicant has engaged a Land Agent to support obtaining the land access required to complete its EIA surveys.

The applicant queried the need for an Evidence Plan Process (EPP) Steering Group. The Inspectorate explained that this was at the applicant's discretion but to be cautious of other parties resourcing capacity and to therefore commence any EPP after scoping and non-statutory consultation. It suggested the steering group could be a useful means to identify key issues for further discussion and provide clarity on how the Moir Vannin Generation and East Irish Sea Transmission projects interact. The Inspectorate also explained it could provide government guidance and evidence plans, but it is the applicant's decision whether this would add any value to its application. The Inspectorate reiterated that a multi-party meeting would require at least six weeks' notice and an agenda two weeks before so it can allocate resources accordingly.

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

The Inspectorate queried the presence of Crown Land in the project and explained a failure to obtain approval can cause significant delays to the consenting proposal. The applicant is having discussions with the Crown Estate regarding embedding infrastructure within the seabed and are aware of the importance of progressing this matter as swiftly as possible.

The applicant is in early-stage negotiations with landowners.

Consultation (statutory and non-statutory)

The applicant is anticipating holding statutory consultation on its SoCC in Q2 2026 with a further statutory consultation and PEIR in Q3 2026. The applicant will submit its Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) to the Inspectorate in February 2027. This is to provide adequate time for the applicant to analyse and action the feedback received from the statutory consultation before its DCO submission.

Submission date

Submission is anticipated in September 2027.

2. The pre-application service offer

The service tier requested by the applicant, including justification

The applicant has requested the basic service tier. This is due to the applicants' previous experience in the application process and prior consultation with stakeholders. While the applicant recognises the Inspectorate's ability to chair Evidence Plan meetings and hold additional meetings throughout the year, the applicant retains the ability to change tiers to require this service at a later date, provided at least three months' notice is given.

At present, the applicant does not envisage a draft document review or any evidence plan meetings from the Inspectorate but this will be kept under consideration.

3. The Inspectorate's comments on the Programme Document

- Broad compliance with the Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects Guidance.
- The applicant will be aware that one of the mandatory components of the new pre-application service (for all service tiers), as set out in the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus, is demonstrating regard to advice. As such this should be clearly reflected in the application documents.
- The applicant must ensure that the Programme Document (PD) is hosted and maintained on the applicant's website.
- It would be helpful if the PD could provide approximate timescales for project update meetings with the Inspectorate. It would also be helpful to list any future meetings with key stakeholders to enable those parties to deploy resources effectively.
- PD should contain greater clarification on the status of PPA and DAS agreements with LPAs and Statutory Bodies?

Annex A

Meeting attendees

Organisation	Role
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Manager
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Manager
Planning Inspectorate	Operations Lead
Planning Inspectorate	Senior EIA Advisor
Planning Inspectorate	Case Manager
Planning Inspectorate	Case Officer
Orsted East Irish Sea Transmission Limited	Consent Project Manager
Orsted East Irish Sea Transmission Limited	Consultation Manager