

Meeting note

Project name	Equinor UK
File reference	N/A
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	18 March 2019
Meeting with	The Planning Inspectorate Equinor UK
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Meeting objectives	Inception meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. 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 (the 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 meeting note could be delayed up to six months (if requested by the Applicant for commercial reasons), or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Project Update

The Applicant confirmed that subject to the Crown Estate's Habitats Regulation Assessment, the Applicant is expecting to sign a lease Q3 2019 with the Crown Estate.

The Applicant has submitted a grid connection application to National Grid (NG) and has received an initial offer to connect into the Norwich main substation. The Applicant confirmed that NG will issue a second grid connection offer. It was confirmed that the offer could be split in two or be reduced if necessary.

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that they will delay the scoping report until September 2019 with the aim of submitting the development consent order application in July 2021.

Engagement with key stakeholders is ongoing. The Applicant raised concerns about Natural England's ability to engage with the project as a statutory body at the pre-application stage. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it has drafted Terms of Reference for the Evidence Plan process.

Consenting route discussion

The Applicant is assessing different options of consenting the windfarms. The options were presented and discussed in general and the option of one Development Consent Order (DCO) application containing either two or three Nationally Significant

Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs), one for each windfarm and one for the grid connection (if designated an NSIP), was discussed in particular. This approach had advantages if one element of the DCO application was not given consent. Designating the grid connection would also make the transfer of it to a different undertaker easier. The Inspectorate was of the opinion that if an application to designate the grid connection was to be sought from the Secretary of State this ought to be taken forward and completed before a scoping request is submitted. The Inspectorate advised against submitting a scoping request with several possible scenarios for consenting the Proposed Development.

The impact on the Applicant's ability to Compulsory Acquire (CA) land was discussed. The Inspectorate highlighted the complications of having two different DCOs with the power to CA the same plots of land and the impact on the project if one DCO application was rejected. It was further highlighted that only one scenario could be built even if multiple DCO applications were submitted.

The Inspectorate highlighted that from an environmental point of view one application could be easier to assess, however the drafting of the order could become very complicated.

The Applicant stated a preference for separate Deemed Marine Licenses for the windfarms and the grid connection.

Any other business

- The Applicant was advised to review the section 51 advice for East Anglia 1 North and East Anglia Two.