



Welcome to the third newsletter for North Falls, an offshore wind project now under development

North Falls is a proposed offshore wind farm development on a 95km² site in the southern North Sea located 42 kilometres from the UK coast at its nearest point. It is an extension project to the existing 504MW Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm and is owned in an equal joint venture by two major energy companies: SSE Renewables and RWE.

Statutory consultation round-up



45,595

invitations mailed



147,946

online impressions



5

public events



2

webinars



4,624

visits to the portal



642

written feedback



North Falls completed its statutory consultation phase in July and since then the team has been reviewing responses and determining how elements can be incorporated into the project.

Two key changes to the project are already noticeable in the project description above as we have made the decision to remove our northern array which means the project is now both further from shore – from the former 22 kilometres to 42 kilometres – and smaller in size – down from 150km² to 95km². This change will make a significant difference to what will be visible from shore, particularly from the Suffolk coast (see last page for more details).

The consultation comprised five face-to-face events and two webinars with a total of 231 attendees, and a resulting 642 pieces of written feedback from individuals, statutory bodies and community consultees. The feedback covered a wide range of varying issues, from the location of the grid connection and preference for an offshore location, to more specific questions related to individual properties.

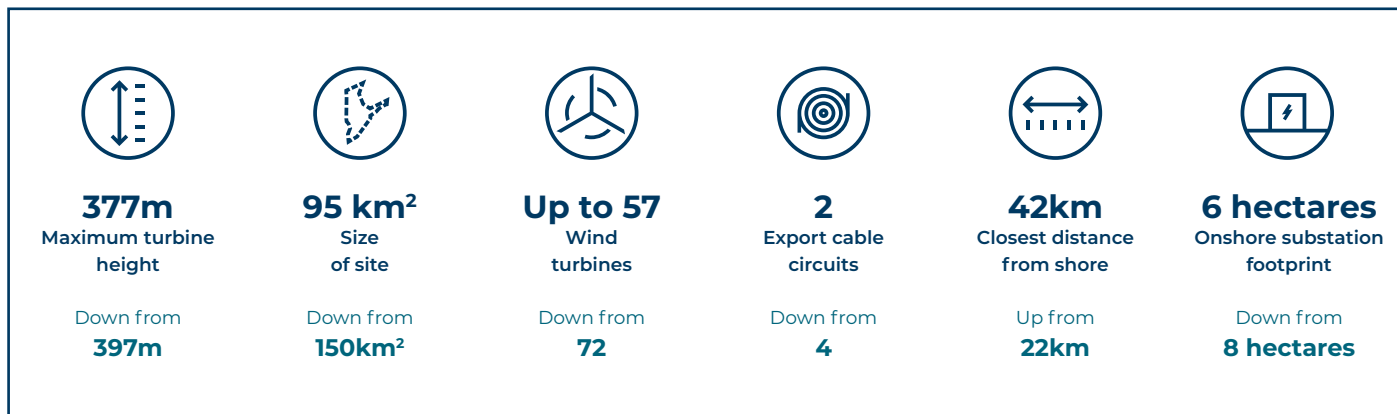
This newsletter provides an overview of some of the most widely submitted feedback and a summary of how North Falls has been influenced to take it into account within the proposals that will be submitted as part of the development consent order application. More detail can also be found on the 'frequently asked questions' page of the project website, which has been updated following the consultation.

All the information presented during the statutory consultation, including the North Falls Preliminary Environmental Information Report, remains available to review here: stat.northfallsoffshore.com, now with a summary of the responses received from the feedback questionnaire.

Next steps will be to carry out targeted consultation and, working closely with neighbouring offshore wind farm Five Estuaries, to engage the local community on certain elements including the combined proposed onshore substation infrastructure. To receive details of this activity, please register your interest via the North Falls website at www.northfallsoffshore.com.

Project parameter changes

A number of the project's parameters have changed following consideration of consultation responses including:



Cooperation with Five Estuaries

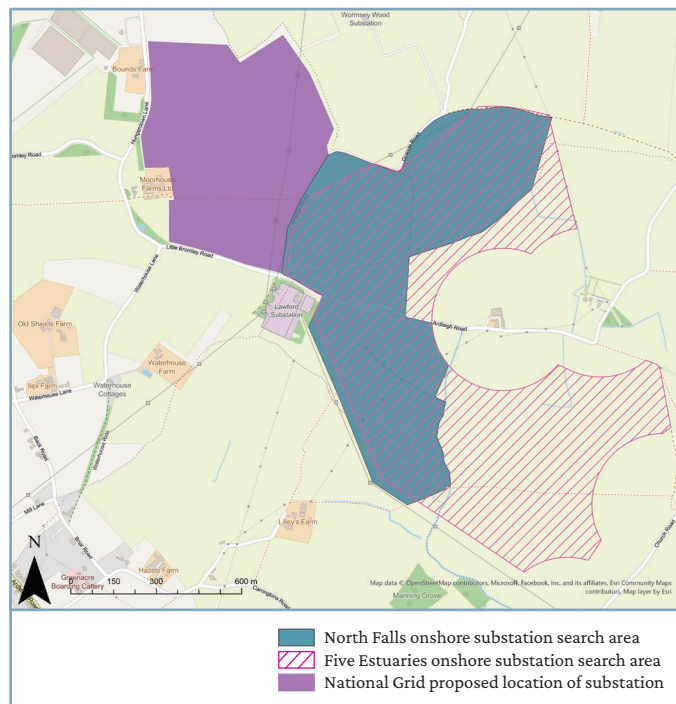
In the event of an onshore grid connection option, there was a marked preference for more cooperation and coordination between North Falls and Five Estuaries in relation to landfall location, onshore corridor route, substation location and stakeholder engagement.

The projects have now signed what is called a 'good neighbour agreement' that enables closer liaison, information sharing and joint planning.

The first key decision since this agreement, and having considered consultation feedback from stakeholders, the local community and landowners, is that each project has reduced the maximum number of export cable circuits it will include from four to two. This decision will result in the reduction of impacts both onshore and offshore, particularly during the construction phase.

The combined construction corridor is now proposed to be 90 metres wide rather than the previous width of up to 250 metres. Landowners along the cable corridor will be contacted directly by land agents Dalcour Maclaren, working on behalf of both projects, with a view to discussing what this decision means to them specifically.

North Falls recently decided on the location of its landfall construction compound which means it will be closer to Five Estuaries announced preferred landfall (the northern option presented in its statutory consultation).



Map showing the search areas for the North Falls and Five Estuaries onshore substations along with the proposed location of the National Grid substation.

Five Estuaries has also recently selected its preferred substation search area which now overlaps with North Falls' substation search area. Together these decisions give greater scope for the projects to work together.

Towards the end of this year, both projects will jointly engage with local communities, particularly those near the onshore substation location, to present how the infrastructure could look in combination and to provide an update on the project proposals.

Issues and actions from the consultation

A wide range of issues was raised during the statutory consultation that will be addressed either via further consultation and engagement or in the Environmental Statement and Consultation Report.

This is a high level summary of a number of the most commonly raised issues and what actions the project is taking to address them.

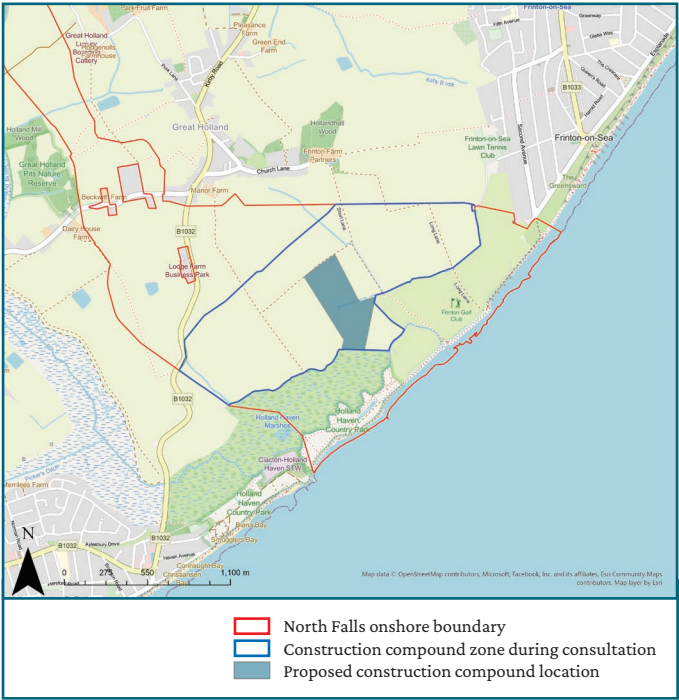


Offshore

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Visual impact of the turbines	People were concerned about the visual impact of the wind farm, particularly from the Suffolk coast, and any tourism or seascape impacts.	North Falls has decided to remove the northern array which was the section of the project that was closest to shore and where the turbines would have potentially been most visible. This means the closest turbine to shore will no longer be 22 kilometres but rather 42 kilometres, which will significantly reduce what people onshore will be able to see. Removal of the northern array will also reduce the offshore footprint, alleviating concerns from the shipping sector and reducing the impact on birds.
Size of the turbines	A number of responses felt the maximum turbine sizes included in the proposals were too large and would impact visually.	The maximum height of the turbines has been reduced by 20 metres (from 397m to 377m) and the maximum number of turbines likewise has been reduced by 15 (from 72 to 57). Combined with the removal of the northern array, the reduction in turbine height and number should alleviate most of people's concerns around visibility.
Offshore grid connection	The majority of consultation responses stated a preference for North Falls to have a grid connection offshore, rather than the proposed onshore grid connection in Ardleigh, primarily due to its link to National Grid's proposed Norwich-Tilbury reinforcement project.	North Falls continues to play an active role in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) with other key stakeholders involved in the delivery of offshore wind and remains committed to including an offshore grid connection option within the development consent order application we submit to the Planning Inspectorate.
Number of export cable circuits required (offshore)	Consultees with a marine focus questioned the need for four circuits per project for the offshore export cables, as initially proposed by both North Falls and neighbouring Five Estuaries.	Both North Falls and Five Estuaries have carried out additional design and engineering work and concluded that the projects can progress with two circuits each. Offshore, this will mean fewer cables on the seabed, reducing shipping and navigation concerns. It also means both projects can potentially utilise the same landfall location, and reduces the onshore construction impacts considerably due to reduced working widths (more details under Onshore below).

Landfall

Subject	Issue raised
Landfall construction compound	A preference was for North Falls’ landfall construction compound to be located away from the Holland Haven marshes and site of special scientific interest (SSSI) and to keep disturbance to Frinton Golf Club and the beach huts to a minimum.
<div>Actions</div> <p>North Falls will place its construction compound to the east of Kirby Brook. It will avoid Holland Haven Marshes and be outside of the SSSI. This location means that the cables will no longer go underneath Frinton beach huts. Horizontal directional drilling will be used under the golf club, with the construction compound placed to the edge of its western end to reduce impacts. The decision from North Falls means the construction compound will now be closer to Five Estuaries announced preferred landfall (the northern option presented in its statutory consultation). This gives greater opportunity for the projects to coordinate landfall works.</p>	

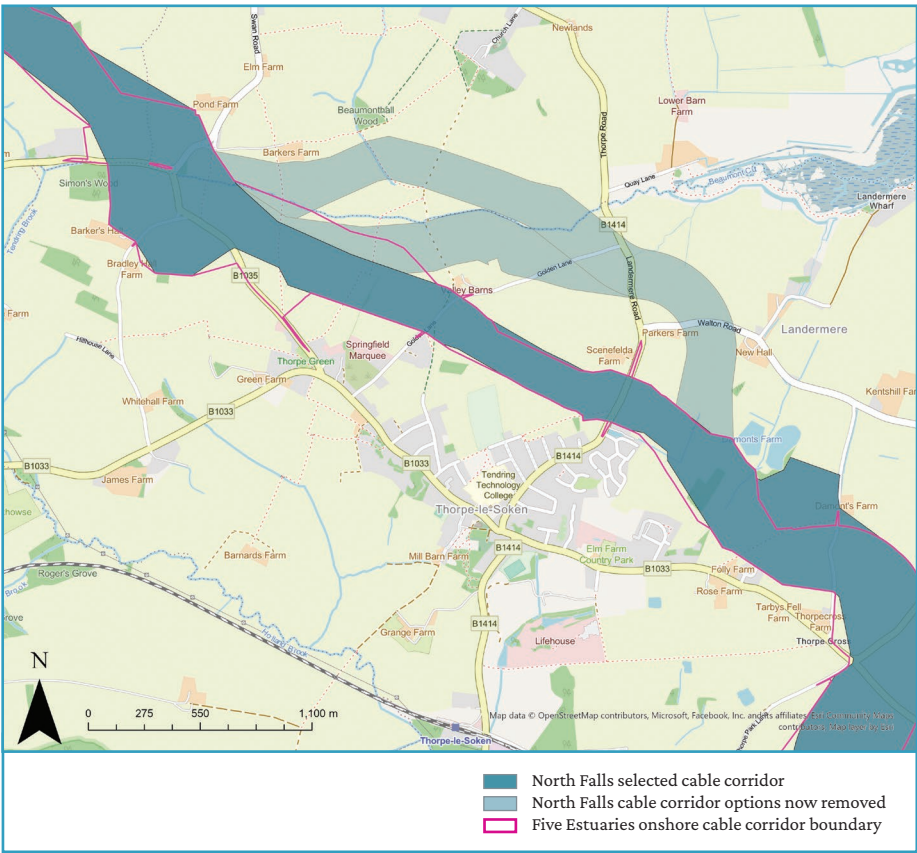


Map of North Falls proposed landfall construction compound location.

Onshore

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Number of export cable circuits required (onshore)	Consultees, including many landowners, questioned the need for four circuits per project for the onshore export cables, as initially proposed by both North Falls and neighbouring Five Estuaries.	As with offshore, the onshore export cable circuits will also be reduced from a maximum of four per project to two per project. This will decrease the overall footprint of the cable corridor, and reduce the impacts on land take and the environment. It will result in reduced widths of the cable corridor during construction and the legal easement post-construction.
Onshore cable corridor width	Consultation responses asked that both North Falls and Five Estuaries reduce the number of export cable circuits and consequently the width of their combined onshore construction cable corridor.	Having reduced the maximum number of export cable circuits from four to two per project, this also means the proposed combined onshore cable corridor will be reduced. It will predominantly be 90 metres rather than the originally proposed up to 250 metres. This allows for soil storage, internal haul roads and possible micro-siting plus flexibility for use of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) under constraints, such as roads. There is ongoing work to identify the final combined construction cable corridor which may lead to further refinements.
Onshore cable corridor alignment with Five Estuaries	As well as requesting a narrower cable corridor, consultation responses also asked or North Falls and Five Estuaries to more fully align their onshore cable route so as to minimise the local impacts.	The cable corridor for both projects is now almost fully aligned along its length, and joint work is ongoing around both the route and the future planning in terms of construction. The projects have signed a ‘good neighbour agreement’ which enables greater cooperation, coordination and transparency as the projects head towards submission of their development consent order applications.

Onshore



Map showing the refined North Falls cable corridor near Thorpe-le-Soken. The top two light shades options have now been removed and the route will follow the darker coloured southern route.

Subject

Thorpe-le-Soken cable route options

Issue raised

As part of the consultation North Falls included a northern, central and southern option for the cable corridor near the village of Thorpe-le-Soken and asked the community for their preferred route.

Actions

Having reviewed the consultation feedback, undertaken further engineering design and re-assessed ways to mitigate potential impacts on the community, environment and residential properties, the southern route will now be progressed. This route is closest to Thorpe-le-Soken village and was selected because it is outside the Hamford Water Special Protection Area (SPA), and is more linear therefore will better enable creation of a continuous haul road within the corridor, which will help to reduce construction traffic impacts locally.

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Construction traffic	Responses expressed concern about potential increases in traffic due to the construction of the project, particularly bringing attention to narrow local roads, already limited cycling and walking tracks and existing congestion.	North Falls PEIR Chapter 27 Traffic and Transport includes measures to reduce the effects of construction traffic upon local roads. When we submit our application, it will be accompanied by an Outline Construction Traffic Management Plan which will detail these measures such as: how HGV movements will be controlled, monitored and enforced; a ‘Travel Plan’ to manage the number of single occupancy car trips; restriction of HGV movements through Thorpe-le-Soken; use of a temporary haul road along the onshore cable route to reduce the need for vehicles to travel via the public highway, and use of trenchless techniques to cross roads wherever possible to reduce the need for temporary road closures. To ensure safety of cyclists we are also assessing options for a cycle path.
Construction management	A number of responses mentioned disruption during construction as an issue of concern. North Falls was also asked whether it would produce a Code of Construction Practice (equivalent to a Construction Management Plan) to include the measures that contractors will be required to adhere to during construction.	North Falls will now produce an outline version of this document for the project’s development consent order application. The outline will cover a large range of topics including how the effects from dust, noise, light, air quality, water/pollutant management, waste, and so on will be mitigated. It will be publicly available and will include details of how to raise a query regarding non-compliance of any of the contractors during construction.

Onshore

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Private water supplies	Responses from local residents made points with regard to the potential effects of the development of the project upon private water supplies, in particular in the Little Bromley area.	As part of the project's environmental impact assessment, a hydro-geological risk assessment will be undertaken to identify any private water supplies potentially at risk during the project's construction. Once they have been identified, mitigation measures will be developed and presented within the North Falls Environmental Statement submitted with the project's development consent order application.
Onshore ecology	There were general concerns expressed within the consultation responses around impacts of the project on local onshore ecology such as trees, hedgerows, habitats and birds and fauna.	North Falls has committed to at least 10% biodiversity net gain across the onshore area, which will lead to an overall increase in habitats through the project's lifetime. Following consultation, it has been confirmed that the development of the North Falls biodiversity net gain proposals will tie in with Essex County Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy. They will be secured through an Ecological Management Plan that is now being prepared.

Onshore substation

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Size of onshore substation	While noting that the majority of respondents stated a preference for the offshore grid connection option, in the event of an onshore grid connection there were numerous queries about the amount of land required for the onshore substation.	North Falls consulted based on a substation footprint of eight hectares. Taking into account the consultation feedback, and also given further engineering design studies, this has now been reduced by two hectares to a total of six.

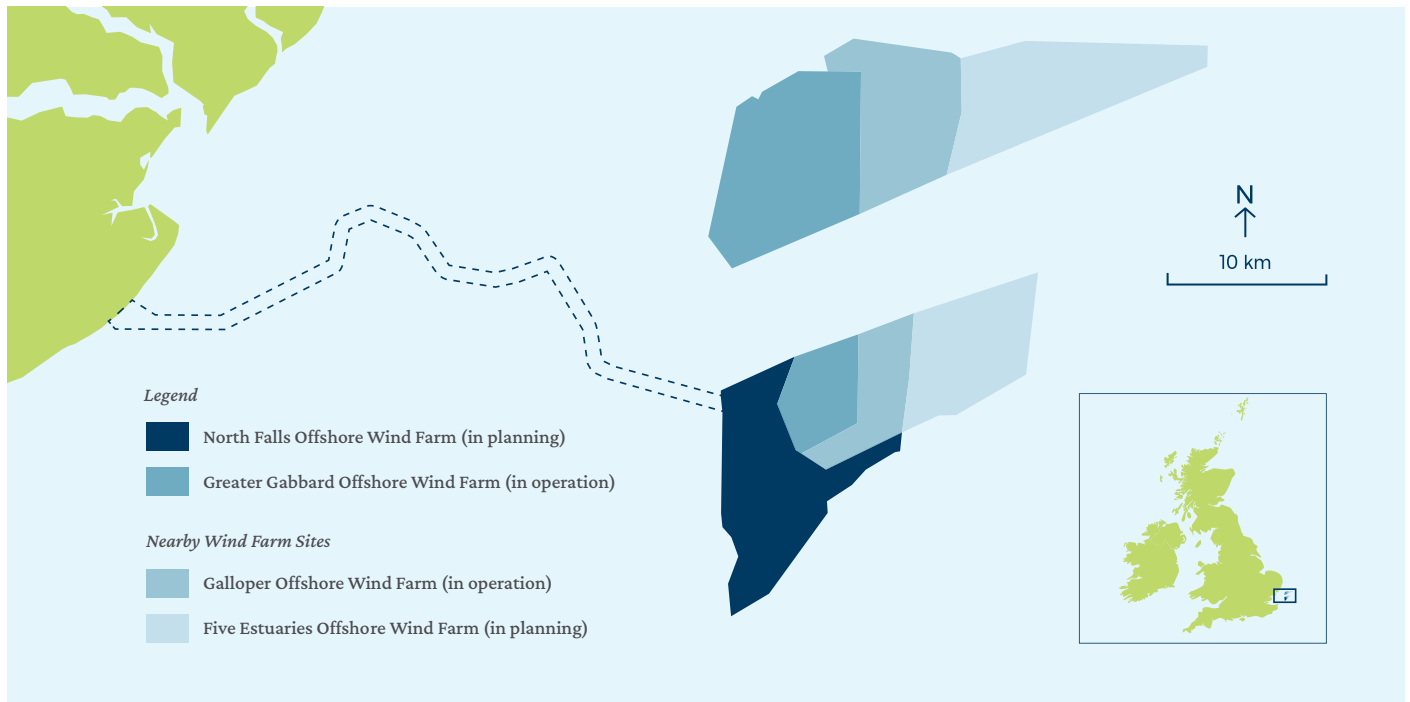
Project-wide

Subject	Issue raised	Actions
Community benefits	North Falls received input and questions around how the project could benefit the communities likely to be impacted by construction works or by the longer term infrastructure, for example via potential legacy projects or funds.	The project acknowledges the expectation of the local community around potential benefits and there are ongoing discussions on potential options and ways to ensure they are anchored within the community. Local consultation will be held on this issue once the development consent order is approved, to develop a plan in partnership with those communities directly impacted.
Local health services	There were some concerns around pressure being put onto the local health services because of a potential influx of workers during the project's construction.	North Falls will undertake a Health Impact Assessment, in line with the advice and best practice published by Public Health England. This assessment will consider the potential increase in demand on all healthcare services in the areas surrounding the proposed development, as well as the effects on other health factors. It will be published as part of the project's Environmental Statement.

North Falls removes northern array

Having removed the northern array from its plans, and reduced the height and number of turbines, North Falls will now look quite different from shore, particularly from the Suffolk coast.

The new North Falls project boundary now comprises one section only and will be less visible from shore and take up less seabed. This decision will also reduce impacts on shipping, marine birds and the wider marine environment.



The new North Falls offshore array comprises one section of 95km².

How will the wind farm look from shore?

To assist people with visualising the changes made, North Falls has updated its 3D interactive visualisation model, removing the additional offshore area, reducing the turbine size to the newly proposed maximum height of 377m and including the new maximum number of turbines which is now 57, as opposed to 72.

To see how the new proposals would look, those interested can access the model and choose from 17 different onshore viewpoint locations: [click here](#)



Scan the QR code with your phone camera to open our visualisation tool.

Offshore grid connection update

The majority of the 642 responses North Falls received during the statutory consultation either partially or wholly mentioned the preference for the project to have an offshore grid connection.

For this reason, and to ensure the project has the maximum chance to be constructed, North Falls' continues to maintain three options for its grid connection including an offshore option that was presented in the statutory consultation.

Work to assess the feasibility of an offshore option is ongoing as part of the Offshore Transmission Network

Review (OTNR) and potentially via the associated Offshore Coordination Support Scheme (OCSS). The OCSS is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and was set up to provide grants to enable the development of coordinated options for offshore transmission infrastructure for late-stage projects within scope of the scheme.

Given this is a continuing process, North Falls remains committed to including an offshore grid connection option within the development consent order application it will submit to the Planning Inspectorate.

Next steps

Having published and consulted on the North Falls Preliminary Environmental Impact Report, the next steps for the project will be to progress its Environmental Statement and other documents, including the Planning Statement and Consultation Report, in readiness for submitting its application to the Planning Inspectorate.

Following the statutory consultation the project team has reviewed feedback and consequently made a number of fundamental changes to the proposals. To fully implement these proposals North Falls will require additional efforts related to technical and engineering design, consultation and planning, and research.

This work means the date the project intends to submit its development consent order application is under review and is likely to move into 2024. This will give more time to address issues, refine the proposals and prepare an application with the best chance of a positive outcome.

Between now and the submission of the application, North Falls will continue to work on addressing the issues brought up during the statutory consultation and engage with stakeholders, particularly with those potentially impacted by the onshore proposals and specifically near the site of the onshore substation.

To register your interest in hearing direct from North Falls, please send your details via one of the methods outlined below.

Contact North Falls

To sign up for future newsletters or email updates please email your details to contact@northfallsoffshore.com; call (24/7) **0800 254 5340** or post to: **Freepost North Falls**, indicating your preference for electronic or printed copy.

Landowners

Landowners should contact the project's land agent: Dalcour Maclaren, 20 Hollingworth Court, Turkey Mill, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP
E: northfalls@dalcourmaclaren.com
T: 01622 623025

Fisheries

Fisheries related queries can be directed to our fisheries consultants: Brown & May Marine Ltd, Progress Way, Mid Suffolk Business Park, Eye, Suffolk, IP23 7HU
E: northfalls@brownmay.com
T: 01379 772871

For more information about North Falls visit the project website: www.northfallsoffshore.com