



**NORTH FALLS**

*Offshore Wind Farm*



**SPRING**  
2025

# North Falls Offshore Wind Farm's Examination underway

**COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER 5**

**North Falls' Examination commenced upon the conclusion of the Preliminary Meeting on Tuesday 28 January 2025. This was followed by Open Floor Hearing 1 on Wednesday 29 January 2025.**

Examination will take up to six months and is expected to conclude by the end of July 2025. Following this, the Planning Inspectorate will have three months to compile a report and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State will then have a further three months to reach a decision as to whether to grant development consent. North Falls expects to achieve consent in early 2026.

## IN THIS NEWSLETTER



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**North Falls and Five Estuaries to produce joint Design Guide**  
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Welcome to North Falls Offshore Wind Farm's fifth community newsletter, which provides an update on the Project's progress through the Examination stage of the National Infrastructure consenting process. Examination is carried out principally on the basis of written submissions, supplemented where necessary by hearings held in public, either in-person, virtually, or a blend of the two.

During Examination the Examining Authority (ExA) will ask questions about the proposed development and anyone who has registered to have their say can get involved and submit comments at each deadline in the Examination timetable (see page three). You can provide comments in writing or request to speak at a public hearing.

The overriding aim of an Examination is to ensure that the Project's principle issues are proportionately, and reasonably, considered.

# North Falls' Examination timetable confirmed

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting on Tuesday 28 January 2025 was to consider how North Falls' application will be examined.

North Falls' timetable for Examination, shown on page three, was finalised via the issuing of a Rule 8 letter by the Planning Inspectorate following the Preliminary Meeting. A note of the meeting has also been published.

Open Floor Hearing 1 was held on Wednesday 29 January 2025. The purpose of this hearing was to allow Interested Parties to speak directly to the ExA about their views on the application.

The Examination timetable contains a number of deadlines for receipt of information by the ExA, the first two of which passed on 18 February and 4 March 2025. All documents relating to these deadlines are available to read on the Planning Inspectorate's website.

## HOW TO TAKE PART

A 'have your say' page is available on the Project page of the Planning Inspectorate's website for people to provide written submissions at relevant deadlines during the Examination. If you are not already an Interested Party then it will be at the discretion of the ExA whether or not your submission is accepted. Submissions will be published as soon as practicable following the relevant deadline closing.

The Planning Inspectorate has published advice for members of the public submitting representations or comments: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-for-submitting-representations-or-comments>

Should you experience any issues while using the have your say page, contact the Planning Inspectorate's North Falls case team directly by calling **0303 444 5000** or emailing [northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:northfalls@planninginspectorate.gov.uk).




# Examination timetable

For more information, please refer to the Rule 8 letter issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 4 February 2025.

Activity	Date
<b>Preliminary Meeting</b> This meeting set out guidelines for how the Examination process will be conducted, including the identification of key issues and timetable for Examination.	Complete (28 January 2025)
<b>Open Floor Hearing 1 (OFH1)</b> This introductory hearing provided the first opportunity for Interested Parties to provide oral submissions to the ExA and for the ExA to ask Interested Parties questions on the evidence they submitted.	Complete (29 January 2025)
<b>Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI)</b> This will offer the opportunity for the ExA and Interested Parties to visit part of the proposed Project area accompanied by representatives of North Falls to help illustrate proposals.	1 April 2025
<b>Issue Specific Hearing 1 (ISH1)</b> This is the first of two planned issue specific hearings, and will cover the following topics relating to onshore environmental effects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landscape and visual impact and design</li> <li>• Historic heritage</li> <li>• Traffic and transportation</li> <li>• Noise and any other health impacts</li> <li>• Agriculture, ground conditions and soils</li> <li>• Flood risk, groundwater and surface water</li> <li>• Socioeconomic effects</li> <li>• Cumulative effects</li> <li>• Coordination and alternatives</li> </ul>	2, 3 and 4 April 2025
<b>Issue Specific Hearing 2 (ISH2)</b> This is the second of two planned issue specific hearings, and will cover the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The draft Development Consent Order (DCO)</li> <li>• Onshore and offshore ecology</li> <li>• Commercial fisheries</li> <li>• Navigation and shipping</li> <li>• Offshore landscape, visual and seascape</li> <li>• Cumulative effects offshore</li> </ul>	8, 9 and 10 April 2025
<b>Week reserved for further hearing(s) and accompanied site inspection(s), if required.</b> This time offers the opportunity for further issues specific hearing(s), compulsory acquisition hearing(s), open floor hearing(s) and accompanied site inspection(s), should they be required.	Week beginning 16 June 2025

To watch recordings of the Preliminary Meeting and Open Floor Hearing 1, view the Rule 8 letter and full Examination timetable, and read all documents submitted at Deadline 1 and Deadline 2, scan the QR code and visit the Project page on the Planning Inspectorate's website.



## WHAT IS AN ISSUE SPECIFIC HEARING?

An Issue Specific Hearing (ISH) is held by the ExA if it thinks it is necessary to find out more about an issue they have already read about in the application documents or representations previously submitted.

If an ISH is held about an issue, it is not necessarily because that issue is more important than other issues, but because the ExA thinks it is necessary to have a discussion and clarify a specific issue.

The ExA will provide an agenda for each ISH, which will give the details of each issue they want to discuss. Anyone can attend an ISH, but only members of the public registered as Interested Parties can request to speak.



## Story so far

### PRE-APPLICATION

**2018:** Early engagement begins and the Project is formally launched as North Falls Offshore Wind Farm.

**October to December 2021:** Stage 1 (introductory) consultation takes place, a non-statutory consultation on the Project's early proposals.

**October to December 2022:** Stage 2 (pre-application) consultation takes place, a non-statutory consultation on the Project's progress following stage 1 (introductory) consultation. Feedback received during this consultation informed the reduction in the width of the Project's offshore and onshore cable route, and the selection of more defined landfall and onshore substation locations.

**May to July 2023:** Stage 3 (statutory) consultation takes place, a statutory consultation focused on the Project's Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). Feedback received during this consultation informed, amongst other things, the removal of the Project's northern offshore array area and reduction in size of the remaining southern offshore array area.

**March to April 2024:** Stage 4 (targeted) consultation takes place, focusing on proposed localised changes to the Project's onshore PEIR boundary. Feedback received during this consultation informed ongoing discussions with land interests and will influence the Project's detailed design of proposed highway improvements.

**July 2024:** DCO application submitted.

### ACCEPTANCE

**August 2024:** DCO application accepted for Examination, triggering the beginning of the Pre-examination phase.

### PRE-EXAMINATION

**September to October 2024:** Relevant Representations period conducted and Examining Authority appointed.

**December 2024:** Rule 6 letter issued by the Planning Inspectorate to Interested Parties, inviting them to a Preliminary Meeting. This included a draft Examination timetable.

### EXAMINATION

**January to July 2025:** Preliminary Meeting held, triggering the beginning of the Examination phase. Examination is anticipated to last up to six months.

**WE ARE HERE**

### RECOMMENDATION AND DECISION

**July to late 2025:** Following the close of Examination, the Planning Inspectorate has up to three months to compile a report and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State.

**Early 2026:** The Secretary of State has a further three months to make a decision as to whether to grant the Project development consent.

### POST-DECISION

**2026:** Six-week period in which the decision may be challenged in High Court.

**2027:** Phased construction expected to begin.

**2030:** North Falls is aiming to be operational.

\*Future milestones are as anticipated at the time of publishing and subject to change.



More information about engagement and consultation undertaken throughout the Pre-application phase can be found in the Project's consultation report (document reference 4.2), which can be found under the documents tab (<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010119/documents>) of the Project page on the Planning Inspectorate's website (<https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010119>).

# North Falls and Five Estuaries Offshore Wind Farm to produce joint substation Design Guide

North Falls and Five Estuaries have committed to work together to produce a joint Design Guide, which will govern various aspects of the design of their proposed co-located substations.

This joint Design Guide will supplement North Falls' Design Vision, which was submitted as part of the Project's DCO application and sets out the proposed approach to the design of the Project's onshore substation and its associated infrastructure. The content of the Project's Design Vision was summarised on pages six and seven of our last community newsletter, which is available to read online here: [www.northfallsoffshore.com/documents/](http://www.northfallsoffshore.com/documents/)

## PURPOSE OF THE JOINT DESIGN GUIDE

By collaborating on the Design Guide, North Falls and Five Estuaries will aim to better realise opportunities to mitigate potential impacts of the development of each project's proposed onshore substation, should the projects achieve development consent. Mitigation measures will address aspects such as access and egress, layout, drainage, landscape and biodiversity, among others.

## TO SUMMARISE, THE DESIGN GUIDE WILL:

- Outline the approach to good design for both projects, with reference to all relevant Planning Inspectorate guidance and local planning requirements.
- Provide an overview of the design process, including how an initial indicative design will develop into a more detailed design.
- Explain the implementation of the Design Guide, when it comes to building the co-located substations.
- Establish key design principles and commitments with the aim of reducing the cumulative impacts of the two projects' substations.
- Explore the substation design in more detail, including the use of colour, materials and layout.
- Explore landscape and ecological design in more detail, including an analysis of influences shaping the existing landscape character; the ecological context and any opportunities to contribute to wider ecological value; better understand how the development will sit within the landscape; and how the landscape design can incorporate requirements for biodiversity.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

In the coming months, a draft of the Design Guide will be developed between the two projects and engagement will be undertaken to obtain feedback from stakeholders.

The development of the Design Guide will be an iterative process and outputs from stakeholder engagement will help to shape the development of the Design Guide.

The Design Guide will be developed with Essex County Council and the designs for each project's proposed onshore substation will ultimately require approval by Essex County Council before any construction works begin.

More updates on the development of the Design Guide will be provided in future community newsletters.

## Frequently asked questions updated

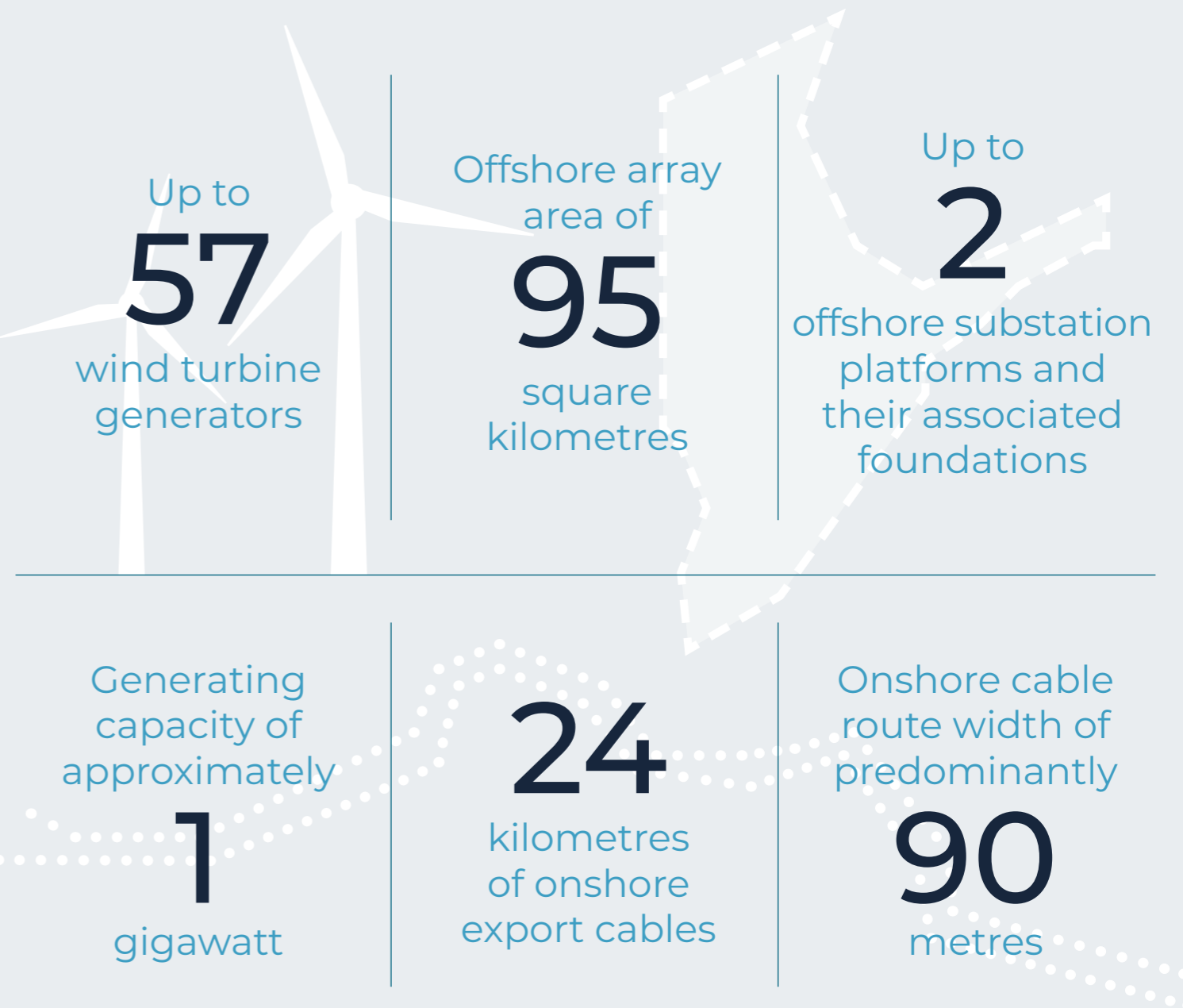
We regularly review and update answers to people's most commonly asked questions. Our most recent update was completed at the end of January.

This includes information relating to the Project's grid connection, coordination with Five Estuaries Offshore

Wind Farm, the Project's onshore cable corridor and proposed onshore substation, constructing the Project, and other general questions.

These are available to read here: [www.northfallsoffshore.com/about/frequently-asked-questions/](http://www.northfallsoffshore.com/about/frequently-asked-questions/)

## North Falls at-a-glance:



# Supply chain update

In our last newsletter we announced the launch of our online supplier registration and in the months since we've experienced positive engagement. Thank you to those who have registered their interest so far.

This is a renewed call for those in the offshore wind sector to register their interest by completing the form on the suppliers' page of the Project website: [www.northfallsoffshore.com/supplier-registration/](http://www.northfallsoffshore.com/supplier-registration/). Suppliers that register their interest will be agreeing to receive Project updates and in time opportunities for introductory engagement with the Project's supply chain team. Interested suppliers are required to provide a short summary of their company's services and credentials. You can also upload a relevant supporting document, such as a company brochure.

As a Project we're particularly interested in hearing from companies capable of enhancing our construction capabilities; companies at the forefront of innovation and bringing forward new technologies applicable to onshore and offshore development.

We're at an early stage in our supply chain engagement and we don't anticipate beginning phased construction until 2027. However, we're committed to carrying out early engagement with potential suppliers and will be looking to ramp up our engagement and be in regular communication with the supply chain throughout the year. To that end, we have set up a dedicated email address: [suppliers@northfallsoffshore.com](mailto:suppliers@northfallsoffshore.com)

## INCLUSION, FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY



North Falls is committed to an inclusive procurement process that promotes fairness and equality with the aim of fostering collaborative partnerships geared towards mutual success and impactful outcomes.

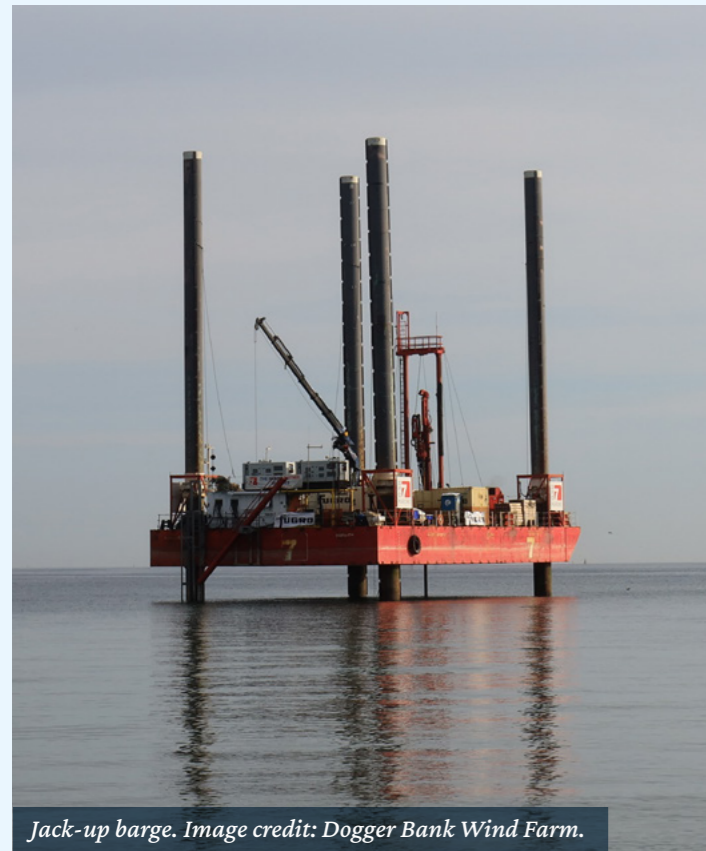
North Falls' approach will also align with United Nations Sustainability Development Goals and both SSE Renewables and RWE's respective sustainability strategies.



Cone Penetration Testing (CPT) truck. Image credit: Dogger Bank Wind Farm.



Trial pitting. Image credit: Dogger Bank Wind Farm.



Jack-up barge. Image credit: Dogger Bank Wind Farm.





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