



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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1. OFFSHORE WIND IN THE UK

Discussing weather is a recognised UK pastime and while wet, grey and changeable skies offer an almost daily topic of conversation, our climate has one key benefit. As the windiest country in Europe, the UK is perfectly placed to generate renewable electricity from wind.

It has made us the world leader in offshore wind with more installed capacity than any other country. In the past 12 years, the capacity of the UK's offshore wind farms has increased from only one gigawatt (GW) in 2010 to more than 13GW at the start of 2023, and costs per megawatt hour have been driven down by almost two-thirds.

In short, the offshore wind sector has become one of Britain's most laudable industrial success stories.

However, it is still a sector in its relative youth, with plenty of potential for further growth in the UK and export internationally. In its Energy Security Strategy, the government announced its ambition for the UK to install 50GW by 2030. This ambition goes even further than the Sector Deal, agreed in 2019 between the offshore wind sector and the UK Government, aiming for 30GW of installed capacity by 2030.

The UK Government's new vision is for offshore wind to power every home in the UK by 2030 and the plan has emerged as a central plank of Britain's green recovery after the coronavirus crisis. The aim is to ensure the nation is best placed to meet its 2050 climate goals including legislated decarbonisation targets.

As well as helping to combat climate change and contributing to the UK's net zero ambitions, North Falls will play a role in helping to stabilise the nation's energy prices and improve its energy security.

By generating more electricity from offshore wind, the UK will be less reliant on international energy imports, for example oil and gas, and therefore more self-sufficient. It will also become less susceptible to global price fluctuations in such commodities, which should lead to reduced costs for consumers.

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm will bring numerous local benefits through jobs, skills support, use of local suppliers and community involvement. We intend to work closely with all our stakeholders, government, local communities and the supply chain to ensure we make a positive contribution to not only the nation's net zero ambitions and energy security but also towards its economic prosperity.



2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm (North Falls) is being developed by North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited (company number 12435947). North Falls is a joint venture between SSE Renewables and RWE.

Together SSE Renewables and RWE have been active in the East Anglia region since the organisations jointly developed the Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm, which is located 25km off the coast of Suffolk and was commissioned in September 2012.

In February 2017, The Crown Estate launched a process for wind farm operators to apply for extensions to their existing projects. This opportunity closed in May 2018, with eight project applications received.

A plan level habitats regulations assessment (HRA), was undertaken to assess the possible impact of the proposed wind farm extensions on relevant nature conservation sites of European importance. Expert independent advisors were appointed, and their work included carrying out consultations with the statutory marine planning authorities, the statutory nature conservation bodies and a number of non-governmental stakeholders.

In August 2019, The Crown Estate announced the conclusion of the HRA, confirming that seven of the extension projects, representing a total generating capacity of 2.85GW, would progress to the award of development rights, including what is now called North Falls Offshore Wind Farm.

The Agreement for Lease between North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Limited and The Crown Estate was signed in Autumn 2020. North Falls has been engaged with the Offshore Transmission Network Review since this time, with a joint announcement made in 2022 confirming the project's commitment to exploring coordinated network designs (see 5.1).

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm project is now in the early stages of development with the aim of submitting a development consent order (DCO) application in 2023.

The indicative timeline to the right, shows the progress of the project to date and a high-level provisional programme of activity to come.



High Level Timeline

Date	Action
Summer 2019	The Crown Estate concludes its habitats regulations assessment. Seven projects totalling 2.85GW of new capacity are awarded agreements for lease.
Autumn 2020	Shareholder agreement signed between the two owners, SSE Renewables and RWE. Agreement for Lease signed with The Crown Estate. Early contracts awarded and start of detailed surveys to inform the environmental impact assessment and habitats regulations assessment.
2020 to 2023	Onshore and offshore surveys and studies, project planning and design, stakeholder consultation and community engagement undertaken, along with an environmental assessment and project level habitats regulations assessment. North Falls, along with four other projects in East Anglia, commits to exploring coordinated network designs
2023	Development consent order and supporting environmental information submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.
2024/25	Planning Inspectorate makes recommendation to the Secretary of State. Secretary of State announces decision.
2025	Project design finalised, major component and construction contracts awarded and wind farm constructed.
2030	Wind farm expected to be operational by the end of the decade.

2.1 GREATER GABBARD OFFSHORE WIND FARM

North Falls' sister project, Greater Gabbard is a 140 turbine, 504MW wind farm located in the southern North Sea, 20 kilometres from the East Anglia coast. Construction work began in 2008 and it was officially opened in 2013. It is owned equally by RWE and SSE Renewables and is operated by the latter on behalf of both partners.

Greater Gabbard represented a total investment of around £1.5 billion and created hundreds of jobs during construction as well as 100 long-term new roles at its (then) newly built operations and maintenance base in Lowestoft.

When Greater Gabbard was built, it was the UK's largest offshore wind farm, in the deepest waters and farthest from shore, so the supply chain was embryonic. It was able to utilise the vast experience of Lowestoft-based oil and gas firms and introduce multiple new suppliers into the offshore wind industry.

Local firm Windcat Workboats, provider of crew transfer vessels (CTVs) to transport technicians to and from the site, is just one local success story. The industry has matured significantly since that time but continues to welcome new players, particularly from related sectors keen to transition into offshore wind.

Of the 100 new recruits to the Greater Gabbard operations base, 95% were from the local area and since inception, more than 10 local apprentices have graduated from the wind farm's apprentice training scheme as wind turbine and balance-of-plant technicians. The wind farm has also offered junior engineer roles in disciplines including electrical engineering, SCADA engineering and control & instrumentation. Ex-fishermen have been employed to work on CTVs as part of the drive to find locally skilled people to fill requirements for roles.

The project owners will look to ensure that North Falls will similarly provide contracting and career opportunities for local companies and people throughout each phase of the project's lifecycle.

2.2 RELATED PROJECTS

North Falls is an extension to the existing Greater Gabbard project, the second extension to Greater Gabbard following neighbouring Galloper, which became operational in 2018. Harwich-based Galloper now has its own extension project in Five Estuaries, meaning there are four offshore wind farms in this related group.

Both North Falls and Five Estuaries are in the pre-application stage of development. While they are separate projects with different shareholders, they have a number of similarities including the fact they have both been provided with grid connections at the East Anglia Green Substation. Due to this, North Falls has been working closely with

Five Estuaries on key project elements such as cable corridor selection (to optimise both onshore routes), onshore substation location, environmental surveys and by sharing consultation feedback. The primary goal of this continued coordination is to reduce potential impacts on stakeholders and local communities.



3. DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER APPLICATION

3.1 NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

As a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), North Falls must be consented under the Planning Act 2008 development consent process, which was introduced to streamline the decision-making for such projects.

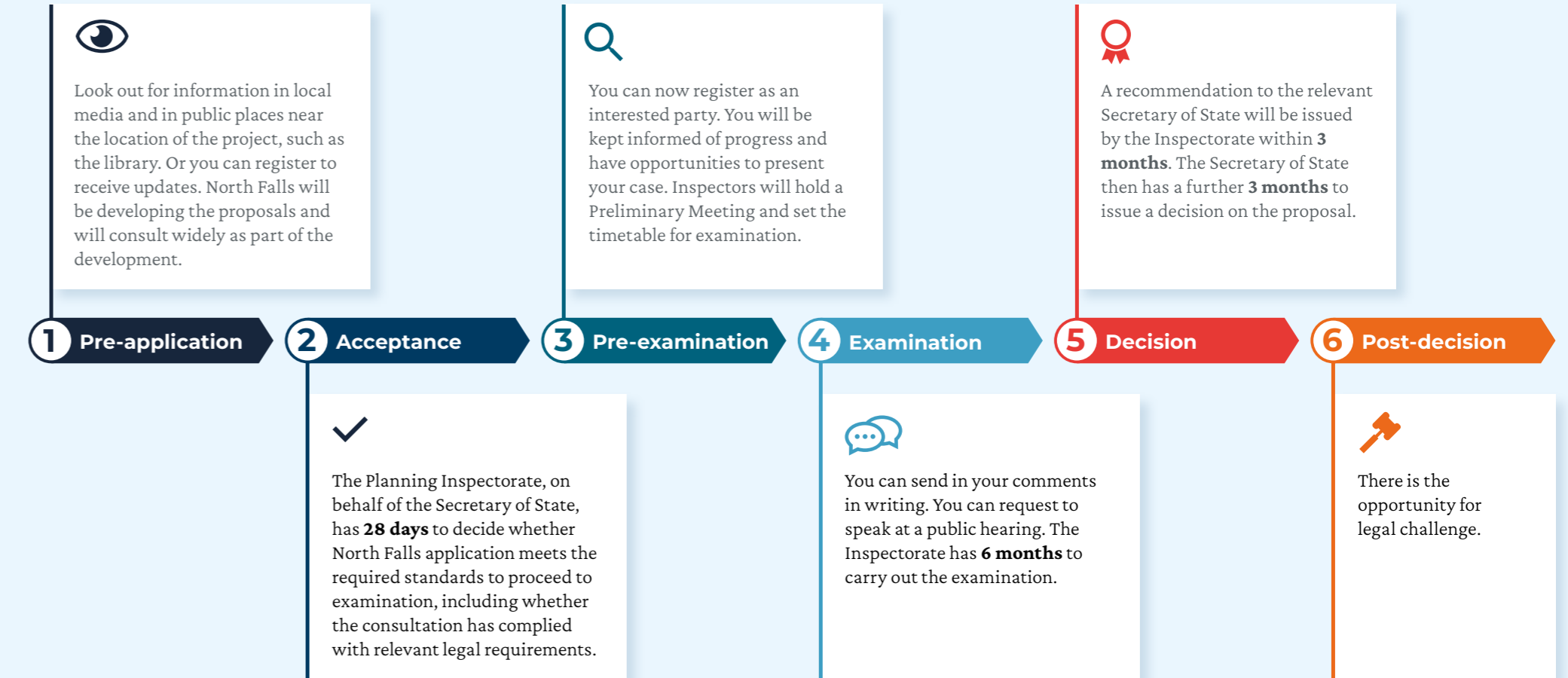
Applicants, such as North Falls, must go through this process to gain permission to build and operate their NSIP. The permission is called a development consent order (DCO). The government agency responsible for examining and making recommendations on applications for NSIPs is the Planning Inspectorate. The final decision on the application will be made by the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.

There are six stages to the development consent order process (see diagram, right).

North Falls is now in the pre-application phase, which runs until its DCO application is submitted. This is the key period for local communities to input into the shaping of the proposals for the project. For North Falls this phase will run until late 2023 and includes at least three periods of consultation which are outlined in this Statement of Community Consultation.

You can read more about the DCO process, including the roles and responsibilities of participants and how to get involved, at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

APPLICATION PROCESS THE SIX STEPS



3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION

In accordance with Regulation 5 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, North Falls will undertake an environmental impact assessment (EIA). The documents listed here will be consulted on during the EIA process and as the DCO application is prepared:



Scoping report

North Falls prepared a scoping report and requested a scoping opinion from the Secretary of State during 2021, as the first stage of the EIA process. The North Falls Scoping Report outlines the receptors that will be considered during the EIA and the proposed data gathering and methodology employed to characterise the existing environment; assess potential impacts; and develop mitigation measures. This document provides high level information which will be expanded on during consultation with technical stakeholders throughout the EIA process. A scoping opinion was published by the Secretary of State in August 2021.

Preliminary environmental information report (PEIR)

Following on from the project's scoping report will be a preliminary environmental information report (PEIR), which will provide further detail on the interim findings of the site characterisation and impact assessment. We have sought feedback from local communities and relevant stakeholders, including local planning authorities and statutory nature conservation bodies prior to beginning our PEIR as part of our consultation in late 2022. As required to comply with Regulation 12(1)(b) of the EIA regulations we have set out in Section 9 details of how we intend to publicise and consult on the PEIR.

Environmental statement (ES)

The ES will be the final report of the EIA undertaken by the North Falls project team, and it will be an evolution of the PEIR. It will incorporate the responses from our consultation and results of the surveys and research undertaken. The ES will also describe any changes made to the project proposals and mitigation measures to be implemented and will form part of the submitted DCO application.

Copies of these reports will be made available online and as part of our public consultations.

4. WHAT IS A STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION?

This statement of community consultation (SoCC) has been prepared in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 and sets out how the local community will be consulted on the proposed development consent order (DCO) application for North Falls.

We are now seeking a DCO for North Falls Offshore Wind Farm, an extension to the existing Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm. With the potential to generate enough green energy to power the equivalent of at least 400,000 average British homes (depending on the final installed capacity), it will play a vital role in decarbonising the UK's energy infrastructure and tackling the climate crisis.

However, we cannot do this alone, we need input from communities to understand the local environment and ensure our project proposals evolve responsibly and with full engagement from those likely to be affected by the construction and operation of the wind farm. Local knowledge and views are important to us and will be carefully considered in the shaping of final plans. Feedback and comments on our plans will be welcomed throughout the development process.

This SoCC has been prepared to make local communities aware of how they will be consulted during the development process. Amongst other matters, it provides details on:



THE PROPOSED OFFSHORE WIND FARM AND WHAT IT WILL COMPRISE OF BOTH ONSHORE AND OFFSHORE



HOW WE WILL CONSULT, INCLUDING THE CONSULTATION TIMELINE



WHO WE WILL CONSULT



WHAT WE WILL CONSULT ON



HOW PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON THE PROPOSALS, AND WHAT WILL BE DONE WITH THE FEEDBACK SUBMITTED

4.1 CONSULTATION ON THE SOCC

The draft SoCC was consulted on with relevant local authorities as well as parish councils, primarily those falling within the original North Falls Scoping Area, including:

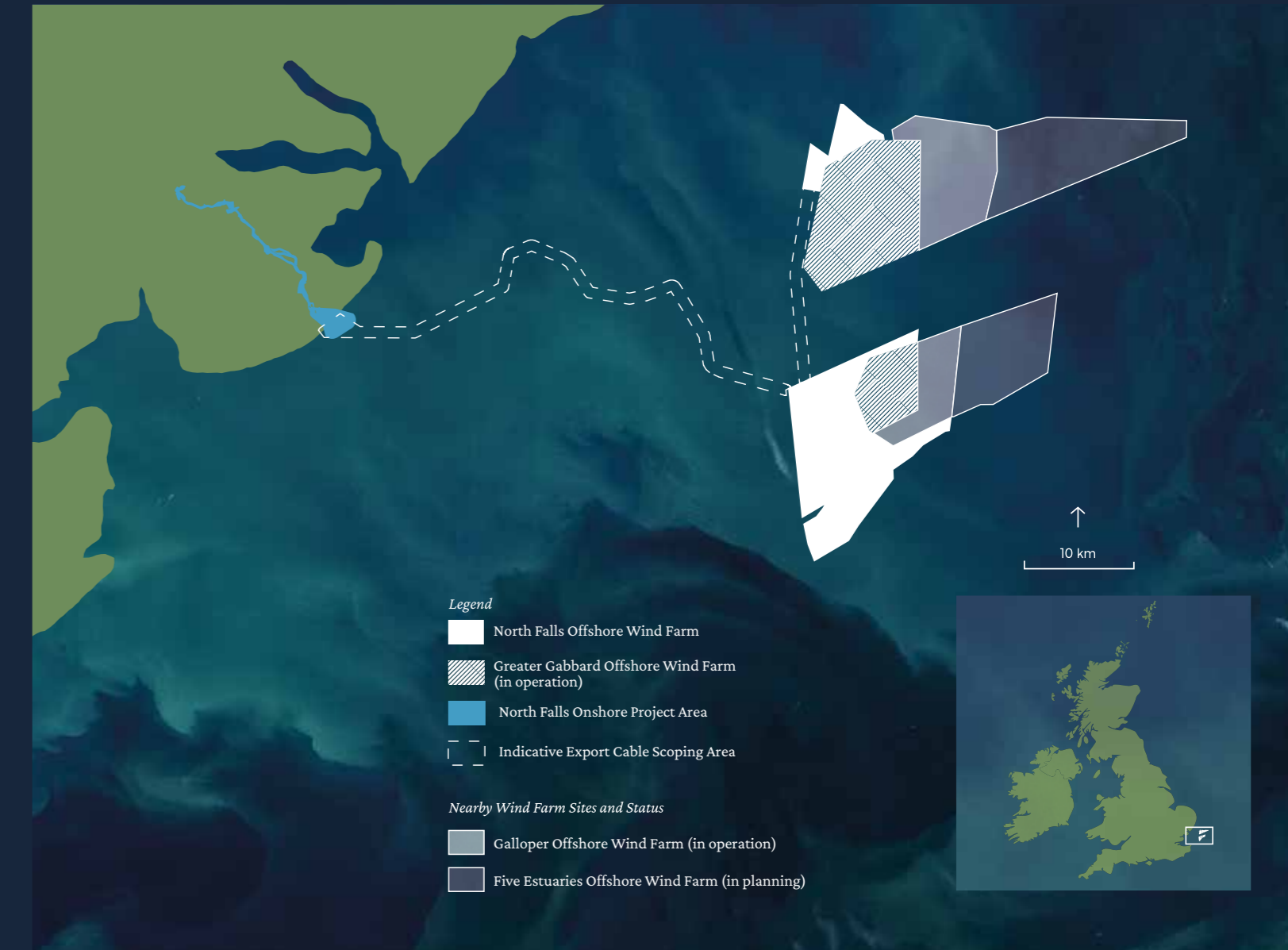
- **ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**
- **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**
- **EAST SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**
- **LAWFORD PARISH COUNCIL**
- **ST OSYTH PARISH COUNCIL**
- **GREAT BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **WEELEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **LITTLE BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **TENDRING PARISH COUNCIL**
- **GREAT OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **WIX PARISH COUNCIL**
- **THORRINGTON PARISH COUNCIL**
- **FRATING PARISH COUNCIL**
- **ALRESFORD PARISH COUNCIL**
- **ELMSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL**
- **GREAT BROMLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **LITTLE BROMLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL**
- **BRADFIELD PARISH COUNCIL**
- **BEAUMONT PARISH COUNCIL**
- **THORPE-LE-SOKEN PARISH COUNCIL**
- **FRINTON AND WALTON PARISH COUNCIL**
- **RAMSEY AND PARKESTON PARISH COUNCIL**
- **ARDLEIGH PARISH COUNCIL**

The feedback received has been considered and where appropriate incorporated into this final version that is now shared with the wider community and publicised as required by the Planning Act 2008. The North Falls Statement of Community Consultation can be read on, or downloaded from, the project website, with hard copies available at local community venues or upon request. The local community venues holding copies of the North Falls Statement of Community Consultation will be:

- **CLACTON CENTRAL LIBRARY**
- **FRINTON LIBRARY**
- **TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL**

5. OVERVIEW

North Falls will be located in the southern North Sea, approximately 20 kilometres from shore at its nearest point. It currently has a total area of 150km² (across the two sections). The project details for North Falls will evolve as work progresses. As well as consideration of the Scoping Opinion, also taken into account will be results of environmental assessments, ongoing engineering and survey work and feedback from our consultations. A key factor in the final project description will be the outcome of the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR).



Map 1 – Location of North Falls and adjoining offshore wind projects

5.1 OFFSHORE TRANSMISSION NETWORK REVIEW AND OFFSHORE GRID CONNECTION

North Falls is participating in the ongoing Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) which is addressing offshore transmission-related barriers to new offshore wind projects that are set to play a central role in the UK meeting its commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

This review has brought together government departments and industrial bodies as well as key stakeholders involved in the delivery of offshore wind, interconnectors and offshore networks. It involves work to identify and bring forward any legislation or regulations needed to enable a more strategic approach and greater coordination around offshore grid connections.

There are currently numerous challenges related to whether North Falls could be offered a feasible and practicable offshore grid connection to replace the onshore grid connection in Tendring, North Essex.

Through the OTNR, North Falls is engaged in technical, regulatory and programme discussions with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem), the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero, third party transmission providers and others, to address these challenges.

However to maintain project momentum and avoid the risk of project delays, our proposals (and this statement of community consultation) will refer to both onshore and offshore grid connection options. By progressing both options, North Falls aims to be in a position to be operational by 2030, and therefore contribute to the UK targets for both offshore wind and net zero.



6. PROJECT COMPONENTS

As per other wind farms, North Falls will comprise: wind turbines on foundations, with the number and types to be determined, and array cables connecting the turbines in strings to up to two offshore substations, also on foundations. The remaining components will depend on the final grid connection option (see diagrams below). The project details will be refined through further design, environmental assessment and consultation work prior to the submission of the application.

Onshore grid connection option

In the event that the project connects onshore, the electricity would be transported from the project's offshore substation(s) via subsea export cables to shore, connecting to onshore buried cables carrying the power further to a new purpose-build onshore substation. The power would then be transmitted to a new National Grid substation, from where it would enter the national grid to be distributed to homes, businesses and industry.

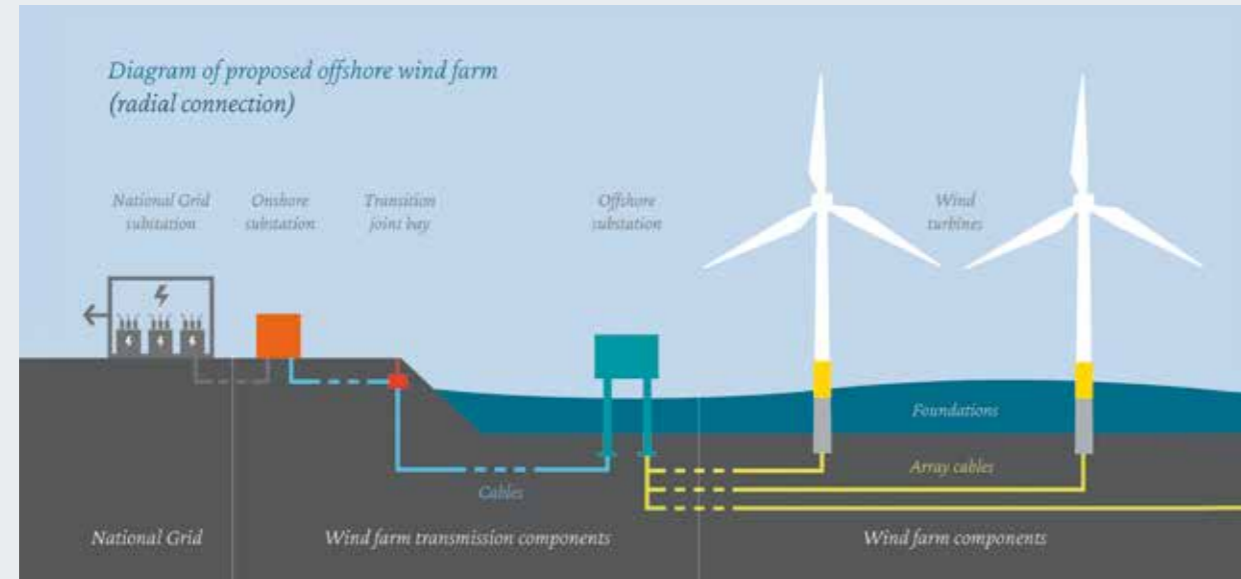


Diagram is a simplified representation only and not to scale.

Offshore grid connection option

In the event that an offshore grid connection is offered to North Falls (as outlined in Section 5.1) the components described in Sections 7.2 to 8.3 would not form part of the project.

In this case the electricity generated would be transported via subsea cables to an offshore connection owned and operated by a separate party. From there, the electricity would run via subsea cables to a point onshore, and onwards to the national grid.

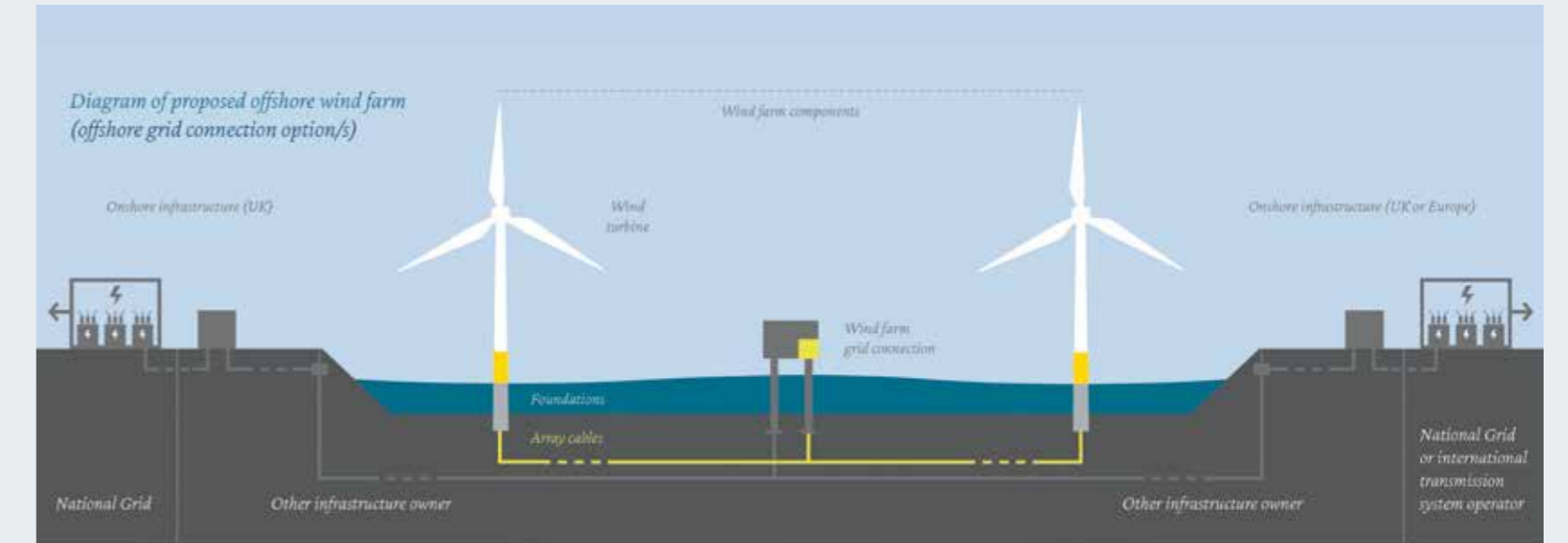


Diagram is a simplified representation only and not to scale.

7. THE PROJECT: OFFSHORE

The offshore project area lies within the Outer Thames Estuary, in the southern North Sea. Its closest point to land is 22km from the Suffolk coast near Orford.

7.1 OFFSHORE SITE

Like our sister project Greater Gabbard, the North Falls site is split into two separate areas, with boundaries which account for the existing shipping route. It will be within these two boundaries that the turbines, array cables, and up to two offshore platform/substation(s) will be installed depending on the grid connection location. The northern area covers approximately 21km² while the larger southern area covers approximately 130km².

The layout of the turbines and arrays will be finalised post-consent. Likewise, the location and design of the offshore platform/substation(s) will also be finalised during that phase of the project. The details in Sections 7.2 to 8.3 are relevant for the onshore grid connection option only.

7.2 EXPORT CABLE CORRIDOR

The electricity generated by North Falls will be transmitted to shore by export cables which will be located within an offshore export cable corridor. Our early site selection work has identified a preferred corridor to run from the southern array area to a proposed landfall on the Essex coast, located between Clacton-on-Sea and Frinton-on-Sea.

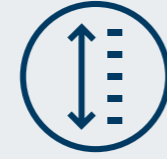
The preferred offshore export cable corridor passes to the north of the environmental designations Margate and Long Sands Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Kentish Knock East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), with a small overlap with the Outer Thames Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) as it approaches landfall. The project design also includes an interconnector cable between the northern and southern array areas.



55km
PROVISIONAL OFFSHORE
CABLE ROUTE LENGTH



Up to 72
NUMBER OF TURBINES



0.5-3m
TARGET MINIMUM CABLE
BURIAL DEPTH WHERE BURIED



2
MAXIMUM NUMBER OF OFFSHORE
SUBSTATION PLATFORMS



228km
ESTIMATED LENGTH
OF ARRAY CABLES



8. THE PROJECT: ONSHORE

Electricity generated by the wind farm will be transmitted to shore via subsea cables that arrive at the North Essex coastline at a location known as ‘landfall’. From here it will be transmitted by underground cables to a new onshore substation, from where it will be further transported to a National Grid substation and then into the national electricity transmission system – the national grid.

8.1 LANDFALL

The landfall – where the export cable from the wind farm will come to shore – will be sited in a location just to the south of Frinton-on-Sea. The export cables will connect with the onshore cables in underground transition joint bays at landfall. The precise location of the proposed landfall location will be narrowed down during 2023, based on environmental and engineering survey data and having considered feedback from our consultation in late 2022. There will be no permanent above ground building at landfall, although there will be temporary disruption during construction. At the landfall site it is proposed to use an installation technique called horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to take the cable deep under Holland Haven Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and so avoid a surface crossing of this designation.



8.2 ONSHORE CABLE ROUTE AND SUBSTATION

The route the onshore cables will take from landfall at the coast to the project substation will be approximately 24 kilometres. The cables will be buried to minimise visual and environmental impact. During construction a temporary working corridor will be needed along with additional areas for temporary construction compounds and site accesses. Generally, these temporary areas will be in parallel with the cable corridor. North Falls will mitigate its impacts as far as practicable, however there will be some temporary disruption during construction.

Once the cables have been installed, the land used during construction will be restored to its former agricultural or other use. Where the cable route crosses features such as roads, watercourses and ecologically sensitive areas, the aim will be to cross them using HDD as described at the landfall, to avoid impacts on these features.

North Falls has accepted the offer from National Grid for a grid connection within Tendring in North Essex. This is where the power from the wind farm will enter the national electrical transmission system. The siting of the North Falls onshore substation will depend both on the specific location of the grid connection and the positioning of National Grid’s own new substation.

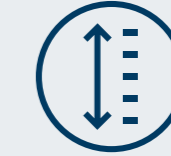
Details of the onshore substation location for the project, its footprint, how it will look and how it will be screened with vegetation, is being consulted on throughout the pre-application process. The only long-term visible infrastructure onshore is likely to be the onshore substation. Landscaping around the substation and other environmental mitigation or enhancement measures will also be present and managed for the lifetime of the project.



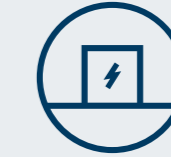
HORIZONTAL DIRECTIONAL DRILLING
PROPOSED LANDFALL INSTALLATION METHOD



HIGH VOLTAGE ALTERNATING CURRENT
ELECTRICAL CONNECTION TYPE



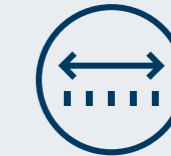
18m
MAXIMUM HEIGHT OF PROJECT'S ONSHORE SUBSTATION



1
NUMBER OF PROJECT ONSHORE SUBSTATIONS



Up to 70m
ESTIMATED ONSHORE CABLE ROUTE WORKING WIDTH



200m x 250m
PROJECT'S MAXIMUM ONSHORE SUBSTATION FOOTPRINT

8.3 ONSHORE SCOPING AREA AND REFINEMENTS

Throughout 2020 and early 2021, the North Falls team carried out a site selection process to define an area in North Essex within which the grid connection and onshore electrical infrastructure were expected to be located. This is known as the onshore ‘scoping area’ (see Map 2).

The scoping area was identified by filtering out broad constraints such as population centres and sites of importance for nature conservation, whilst keeping within a certain distance from existing National Grid infrastructure such as the 132kV line between Lawford and Little Clacton substations.

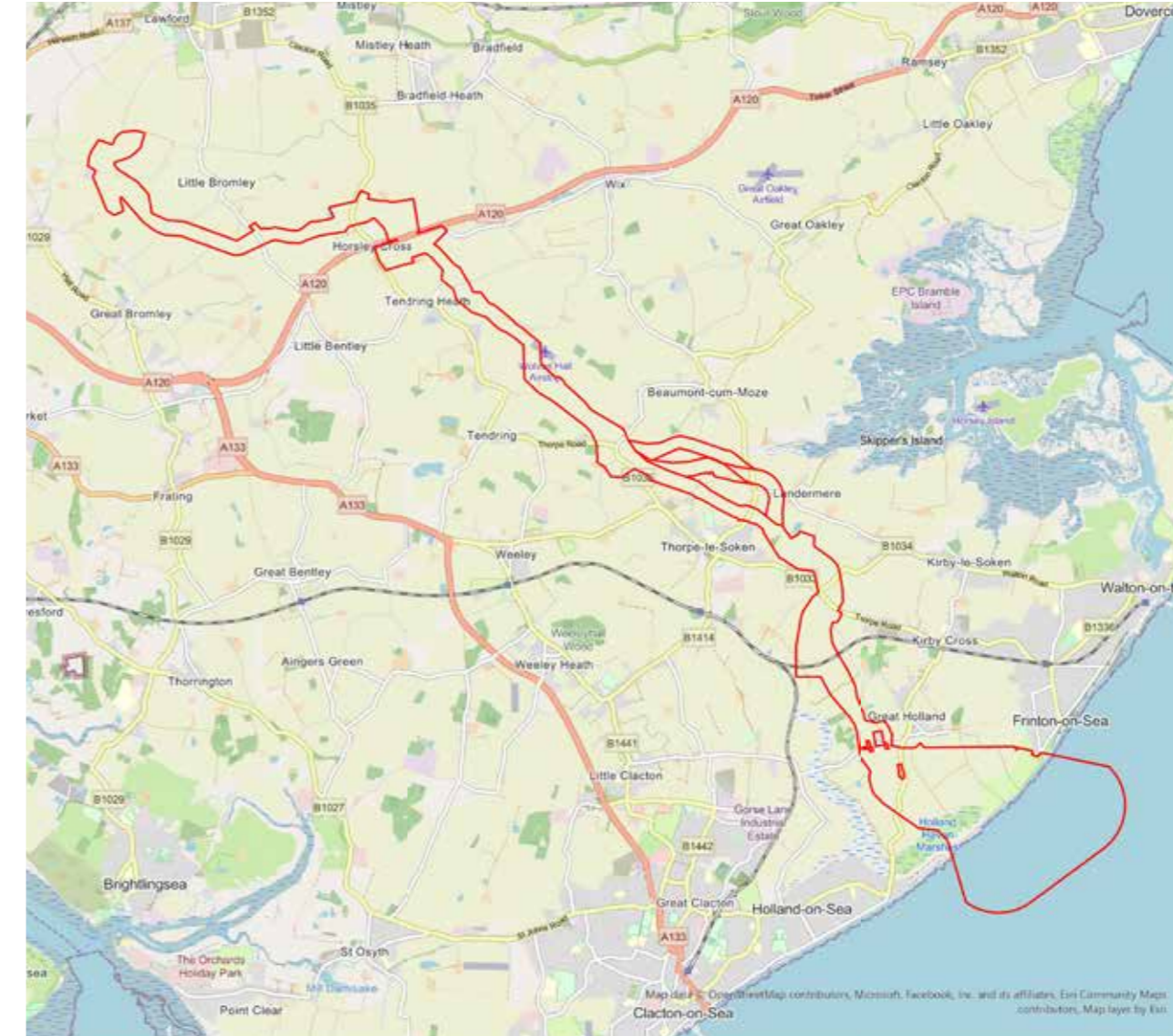
The subsequent onshore scoping area was approximately 150km² and located within the Tendring District of Essex. It extended from the coast, between Clacton-on-Sea and Frinton-on-Sea, approximately 20 kilometres inland. This was the first stage in the site selection process, consultation and ongoing project refinement, to identify preferred locations for each element of the onshore electrical infrastructure.

Our introductory consultation held in late 2021 was based on the full onshore scoping area.

Our second consultation held in late 2022 was based on a refinement of that wider onshore scoping area which was the result of our continued site selection work. This included a wide landfall construction compound zone, including a cable corridor approximately 200 metres in width, optional routes near Thorpe-le-Soken, and an onshore substation zone. The second consultation offered the opportunity to comment on the proposed locations of the project infrastructure as well as construction methodologies and wider project issues such as grid and biodiversity net gain.



Map 2 – Initial North Falls scoping area



Map 3 – The onshore project area for North Falls as shown at the consultation held in late 2022

9. OUR CONSULTATION PROCESS

Local stakeholder and community consultation will be undertaken throughout the pre-application phase, and beyond. The team will act in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 duty to consult, and will seek to engage with stakeholders, defined as any people, groups, organisations or local communities specified by the consultation requirements of the 2008 Act, as well as anyone who responds to the publicity required under the Act. The consultations will gather feedback on the preliminary assessments, including methodology, and on the project itself as it begins to take shape.

Pre-application consultation is the main opportunity for stakeholders to review the plans, provide comments, submit feedback and have an influence on elements of the process and the evolution of the development. North Falls' pre-application phase comprises a multi-stage consultation process with all stakeholders, with the response period provided at each stage to exceed the statutory minimum of 28 days.

Our objective is to ensure that stakeholders likely to be most directly affected by the proposals are engaged in the development of the wind farm from the start to finish, and have opportunities to comment on the proposals at key decision-making junctures. We aim to engage with and respond to stakeholders in a flexible and open way, ensuring discussions are held and responses received in a timely manner so they can be given due consideration as the proposals take shape.

Introductory consultation (2021)

North Falls undertook an initial introductory consultation to seek feedback on the project plans as they stood in Autumn 2021, including on the overall project, engagement approach, the Scoping Report and proposals so far. The information that was consulted on and the summaries of the responses and feedback received are available to view on the consultation portal accessed via the website – www.NorthFallsoffshore.com

Pre-application consultation (2022)

Held in late 2022, our non-statutory pre-application consultation presented onshore and offshore proposals, as well as EIA methodology. This included direct questions for input into specific elements of the proposals, including options for cable corridor routes, as well as the opportunity to give wider opinions on the plans. Consultation methods included: stakeholder meetings, five face-to-face consultation events, two webinars, publications and an online consultation portal, promotion via advertising, media stories, leaflet drops and direct emails. Ways to respond included via the consultation portal, feedback forms (online and printed), attendance at events, project email or website contact form, freephone and freepost. The portal remains online.

Pre-application consultation (2023)

This will be the main statutory pre-application consultation on the full proposed application for North Falls and will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. This will include consultation on the preliminary environmental information report (PEIR). The PEIR will incorporate the preliminary results of the EIA as well as feedback from prior consultations. This consultation will identify specific elements on which input is requested.

Similar to the pre-application consultation held in 2022, the consultation methods will include: specific stakeholder meetings, a series of up to five local face-to-face consultation events, two webinars, publications and an online consultation portal with feedback map. Details of the consultation including event dates, times and locations, will be published both in the local and national press, emailed to statutory and registered stakeholders and via direct mail posted to addresses within the consultation area. Ways to respond will be through the consultation portal including the feedback map (accessible online), via completing feedback forms (online and printed), attendance at events, specific project email or website contact form, freephone and freepost cards.

Final pre-application consultation

An optional fourth and final consultation stage will be shaped as needed, to ensure that consultation is specific to outstanding final inputs prior to the submission of the application. The first consultation stages involved all consultees while the final stage would target specific stakeholders directly dependent on the topics of consultation. The exact format of the consultation activity would be decided based on the outcomes of the previous consultation phases and ongoing project refinements. Those specific stakeholders will be contacted directly either via email, post or through the organisation of meetings.



Our community consultations will be advertised and promoted widely in advance. Wherever practicable they will be scheduled to avoid periods when stakeholders may not be able to attend, such as summer holidays, and to coordinate with other nationally significant infrastructure projects. Having to respond to multiple projects with similar geographical locations and issues may place significant demands on consultees and therefore North Falls will aim to align with other developers to schedule formal consultation in a way that will minimise stakeholder fatigue.

However, stakeholders and prospective consultees should be aware that as a standalone project submitting its own development consent order application, North Falls must carry out its own statutory consultation to ensure it fulfils the legal requirements of the application process. Those consultees wishing to comment on the North Falls proposals will therefore need to ensure they respond directly to the North Falls consultation, regardless of whether their comments are similar to those fed into consultations for other nationally significant infrastructure projects.

As well as defined consultation periods, ad hoc and informal engagement will be carried out throughout the pre-application period on issues of specific interest, areas of expertise or related to statutory responsibility. This may include: meetings with nearby residents regarding the onshore substation site; liaison with fisheries and marine stakeholders on the export cable location or surveys; and targeted communications with directly affected landowners, lessees, tenants and those with an interest in the land. Some of these activities may be in conjunction with other developers; for example, combined activity to date has included presentations to local councils, supply chain events and combined landowner engagement.

There may also be targeted consultations, in respect of localised project elements or issues, or design developments related to potential offshore transmission connections, which arise during pre-application consultation.

Indicative consultation programme

The current timetable for our consultation phases is as follows:

Ongoing	Informal engagement Continued engagement including communication of updated project proposals and impacts resulting from the consultations.
25 October to 10 December 2021	Informal introductory consultation Introduction to the project, scoping and early opportunity for feedback. This consultation has now concluded.
Spring 2022	Statement of Community Consultation Initial consultation with local councils on this document that will be published in 2023. This consultation has now concluded.
17 October to 9 December 2022	Pre-application consultation (non statutory) Consultation prior to commencing preliminary environmental information report. This consultation has now concluded.
2023	Pre-application consultation (statutory) Consultation on preliminary environmental information report. Final pre-application consultation (optional as needed) Final and limited consultation on specific project element(s) if needed.

10. WHO WILL WE CONSULT?

Throughout development, North Falls will consult with the stakeholders noted to gather feedback on the way the project is being assessed and on the project itself as it begins to take shape. The groups of stakeholders, or consultees, are defined as follows:

- ① **Those directly affected.**
This includes statutory bodies, the relevant local authorities, landowners and others with an interest in the land or who may be affected by the construction and operation of a consented scheme. These groups are sometimes referred to as Section 42 consultees.
- ② **The local community.**
Defined as those people living within the vicinity of the onshore infrastructure and certain consultees with an interest in the area, for example, local archaeology groups, mariners and the fishing community or other non-statutory groups. These are sometimes referred to as Section 47 consultees.
- ③ **The general public.**
These are those people beyond the local community who will primarily be reached through national newspaper advertisements and on the project website. These are sometimes referred to as Section 48 consultees.

We will carry out targeted activities for each group of consultees mentioned, however this Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) focuses on how we will consult specifically with the local community likely to be affected by the onshore grid connection option.

We recognise that those living, working or having a specific link to the location of the proposed infrastructure will have a key interest. For the introductory consultation in late 2021, this included targeting those within the initial broad North Falls Scoping Area (see Map 2) via newspaper advertising (printed and digital), local press, leaflets delivered to 40,000 addresses and direct emails. For the second consultation in late 2022, this was more focused on the refined onshore areas (see Map 3) but still included newspaper advertising (printed and digital), local press, leaflets delivered to 12,000 addresses and direct emails.

In 2023 North Falls will focus its public consultation on the areas three kilometres either side of the proposed landfall and the above and below ground infrastructure, and one kilometre from other areas identified as being directly affected by construction activities, such as HGV routes. This focus was decided following feedback from our consultation in late 2022, and will ensure the information best reaches those potentially impacted by the construction works and permanent onshore infrastructure.

Properties within the three-and-one-kilometre consultation areas will receive direct communications such as leaflets from us in the post or via email.



Targeted lists will be developed to direct correspondence to relevant bodies, councils and anyone who has registered an interest in the project.

We will also consult with those communities that will potentially be able to see the completed offshore wind farm.

By selecting the locations outlined we will ensure that all individuals and stakeholders who may be affected by the project will have the chance to respond to the consultation.

We recognise that there may be interested individuals or groups who are not living or working within the public consultation areas. We are committed to ensuring that those people still have an opportunity to view and provide feedback on our proposals. For these people we will advertise in local and national media and will use targeted digital campaigns. Our consultation materials will be published online and available to view and download, or on request using our project contact details.

Throughout the development of our proposals, we will continue to work with local planning authorities to identify any relevant community groups, business organisations and others who should be consulted. As well as the community consultation, we have, and will continue to, engage with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees, including relevant:

- Owners, tenants and occupiers of the land identified within the application or who may be entitled to make a relevant claim.
- MPs and local councils (county, district and parish).
- Statutory stakeholders, such as Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trusts.
- Marine groups and users such as fisheries, ports and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.
- Local interest and community groups, inshore and those along the coast with a particular interest in seascape visual amenity.
- Hard to reach groups.

We plan for our consultation activity to be accessible to a wide range of groups in the community and it will include both online and in-person opportunities for involvement. We will seek venues for public events that are accessible by a range of transport modes and compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

The approach to consultation outlined in this SoCC covers an inclusive range of communications methods to ensure we are able to conduct an open and meaningful consultation across the community.

We recognise that some individuals or groups may have trouble taking part in the consultation process for a range of reasons and therefore we will develop targeted approaches to engage groups defined as hard-to-reach or marginalised.

These groups are those which are, for various reasons, not able to access traditional and conventional methods of consultation and are typically under-represented in the planning process, for example:

- Ethnic minority groups and people for whom English is not their first language
- Elderly people
- Young people
- People with visual, hearing or speech impairments
- People with a disability (physical and learning)
- Those with limited mobility
- Carers, single parents and families with young children
- Socio-economically disadvantaged people
- Geographically isolated communities or individuals, such as those in rural areas
- Service working professionals (such as nurses or teachers)
- Those experiencing homelessness

Throughout development we will continue to liaise with local authorities to identify and establish a line of communication with such groups, setting up a database of identified contacts. We will use this 'hard to reach groups' database to ensure these groups and organisations are kept up to date with the development of the scheme and have ample opportunity to provide feedback.

We will also ask local authorities and organisations who regularly liaise with hard-to-reach groups about their most effective communications methodologies to add to our intended channels which include newsletters, telephone, our online consultation portal and face-to-face meetings. Using these channels, and those recommended by other local stakeholders, we will facilitate two-way communication with these groups and encourage input and feedback. However, we will monitor the approaches used and modify them as needed to ensure we employ the most effective ways to engage with hard-to-reach groups, whether that be via existing but tailored channels or via different targeted methods.

11. WHAT WE WILL CONSULT ON

The aim of the public consultations we are undertaking for North Falls is to ensure that local communities, other stakeholders and technical consultees are able to effectively follow the progress of the project, understand the content of the plans and provide input or feedback to help shape the proposals.

We held our introductory consultation (2021) and first pre-application consultation (2022) so that we could gather initial comments from an early stage of the project's development. Each consultation builds on the previous one to help us develop a deeper understanding of key local issues and community concerns, and to be able to take them into account as the project evolves. This will be part of an ongoing dialogue with communities and stakeholders, during which we welcome input, particularly from people who live or work in the project area and know it well.

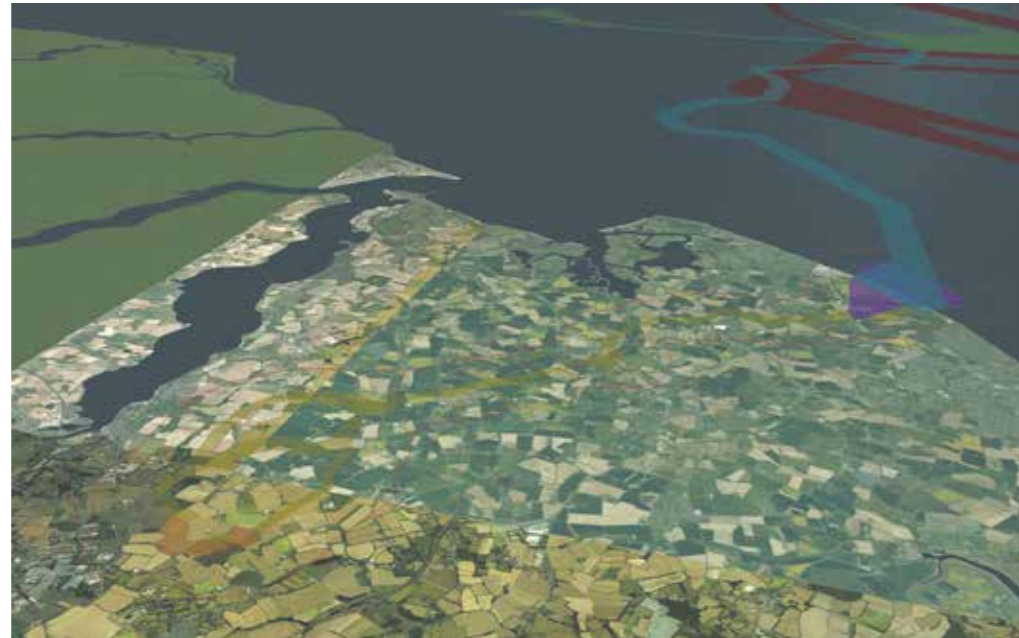
We therefore very much encourage communities to share their local knowledge and input into how North Falls may affect them specifically as well as how it may impact the local area and environment.

We will be seeking feedback to help develop our proposals including, but not limited to, the following:

- Our offshore infrastructure location and the marine environment including consultation with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and local commercial fisheries organisations.
- Our landfall location and siting of the temporary landfall construction compound.
- Refinement of the onshore cable corridor, temporary works compounds and access.
- The temporary construction-related impacts around activity such as traffic management, noise mitigation and the local environment.
- Relationship to other projects including cumulative and in-combination effects.
- Operational impacts that will be more permanent, for example on the local environment.
- Landscape and visual amenity.

At each phase of consultation, we will give the community the opportunity to discuss details of aspects of the North Falls proposals with relevant project team members and utilising a wide range of communication methodologies (listed in Section 12).

Some elements of the project will be relatively fixed, for example the offshore site, whereas others have more room for flexibility and therefore can be altered or adapted



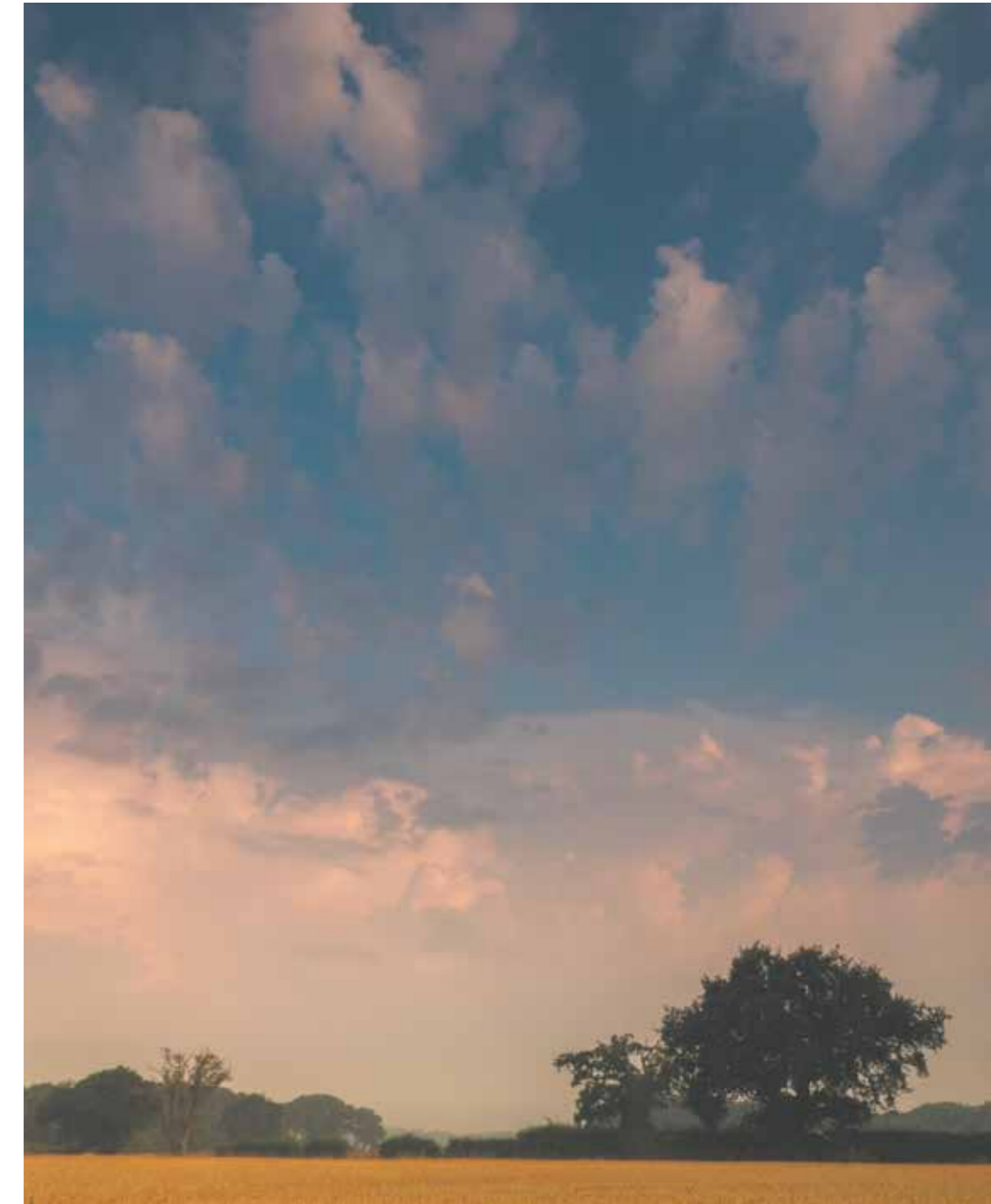
following stakeholder and community input. The application itself will have in-built flexibility around some aspects of the design, such as the layout of the landfall construction compound (in the case of an onshore grid connection) as it will not be finalised until post-consent.

12. HOW AND WHERE TO HAVE A SAY

We will employ a range of consultation methodologies – both traditional and online – to ensure there are multiple ways to provide feedback to the project team. These methodologies will include consultation events and meetings, an online consultation portal, a dedicated project freephone line and project email. We will regularly send project news to those on the North Falls mailing list so any interested parties can register their interest via the contact form on the project website. Consultation methodologies will include:

- Online consultation portal accessed via the project website
- Feedback forms / questionnaires
- Community consultation events (in-person and online)
- Newsletters / factsheets (electronic and printed versions)
- Direct mail (letters, invitations and information materials) delivered to those within the focussed consultation area(s)
- Direct emails to those on the North Falls mailing list
- Print and digital advertising in local newspapers (Clacton and Frinton Gazette)
- Establishment of community liaison groups as applicable
- Meetings with local representatives including parish, district and county councillors
- Project specific website: www.Northfallsoffshore.com
- Social media including Instagram: @northfallsoffshore
- Direct 24-hour phone line: 0800 254 5340
- Project-specific email address: contact@northfallsoffshore.com

Please note that the safety of our consultees will be a priority with any face-to-face consultation, and we will follow any relevant government guidelines in place at the time. Given the fact many people are now also used to the flexibility of being able to comment on proposals in their own time, we will maintain our online consultation in parallel to in-person events.



13. SUBMITTING FEEDBACK AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Meaningful two-way consultation on the proposed plans will be integral to our decision-making process in terms of the final proposal development we put forward in our application.

While we will welcome feedback at any time, there will be specific consultation periods where we will be asking for comments related to defined elements of our proposals. Consultation periods will be widely advertised with opening and closing dates for input highlighted.

After the closing date of each consultation phase, we will assess and consider comments carefully and look at how they can help us shape the final proposals. We will summarise the consultation activity and outcomes via our consultation portal and through summary consultation reports, also available online. Commonly asked questions, and answers, will be posted on the website and expanded with new questions and answers as need arises.

We will provide information on how we have considered comments and integrated community and stakeholder feedback to track the influence of the consultation activity on the project proposals.

Any personal data received as part of the consultation or as part of the consultation process will be stored and protected as per relevant data protection requirements as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Please refer to the North Falls Data Privacy Notice on the project website (<https://consultation.northfallsoffshore.com/privacy/>)

14. HOW TO CONTACT US

There are a number of ways you can find out more about the project, get in touch with the project team or register details to receive updates:



Email:
contact@northfallsoffshore.com



24-hour freephone line:
0800 254 5340



Freepost address:
FREEPOST North Falls



Website:
www.northfallsoffshore.com
Consultation portal:
<https://consultation.northfallsoffshore.com/>



Persons with an interest in land can contact the project's land agent Dalcour Maclaren:
Address: 20 Hollingworth Court, Turkey Mill, Ashford Road, Maidstone, Kent ME14 5PP
Email: northfalls@dalcourmaclaren.com
Telephone: 01622 623025



Fishing industry stakeholders can contact our fisheries consultants Brown & May Marine Ltd:
Address: Progress Way, Mid Suffolk Business Park, Eye, Suffolk IP23 7HU
Email: northfalls@brownmay.com
Telephone: 01379 772871



NORTH FALLS

Offshore Wind Farm



HARNESSING THE POWER OF NORTH SEA WIND

North Falls Offshore Wind Farm is being developed on a site more than 20 kilometres off the UK coast in the southern North Sea and covers a total area of 150 km². It is an extension project to the adjacent 504-megawatt Greater Gabbard Offshore Wind Farm, which became fully operational in 2013.

It is being developed by a joint venture company owned equally by SSE Renewables and RWE.

If you would like to contact the project team, please email contact@northfallsoffshore.com