

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT OFFSHORE SCOPING



North Channel Wind

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NORTH CHANNEL WIND
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1. Introduction

1.1. Project overview and status

North Channel Wind 1 and 2 are two proposed floating offshore wind farms in the North Channel of the Irish Sea. North Channel Wind 1 (NCW 1) is off the east coast of County Antrim, with turbines positioned between 9 km and 25 km from the shore (nearest to farthest).

North Channel Wind 2 (NCW 2) is located off the south-eastern coast of County Antrim and north-eastern coast of County Down, with turbines proposed between 15 and 24 km from shore (nearest to farthest).

The projects are at the scoping stage of development, which gives the opportunity to engage early with statutory agencies and other stakeholders to help identify all the factors that should be considered in the subsequent assessment of the projects.

To inform this engagement North Channel Wind prepared an Offshore Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report (“the Offshore Scoping Report”), which describes the key offshore elements of the proposed projects, the potential effects of the projects on the surrounding offshore environment, and the methods that will be used to gather and assess data to inform the subsequent EIA for the projects.

In addition, a number of environmental, technical and engineering surveys and studies are underway. Consent applications, including Marine Licences and planning permission, are expected to be submitted in 2026. Rights to lease the seabed are granted by The Crown Estate and North Channel Wind intends to submit an application once a leasing round for Northern Irish waters is open. Subject to all necessary permits and consents being achieved North Channel Wind could begin constructing in 2029.

1.2. North Channel Wind development team

North Channel Wind is a wholly owned subsidiary of SBM Offshore, with front end development work being carried out by NMK Renewables.

SBM Offshore is a global market leader in floating offshore solutions for the energy industry. A deep-water specialist with over 60 years of experience and innovation, SBM brings engineering and technical expertise to the projects.

NMK Renewables’ team has decades of experience in the renewable energy sector and are passionate about delivering offshore wind projects that can enhance coastal communities and enable Northern Ireland to achieve its energy and climate targets.

1.3. Commitment to consultation

North Channel Wind is committed to transparent and meaningful engagement with all stakeholders and sees consultation as an integral part of the development process.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for public consultation at the scoping stage of the EIA process, North Channel Wind believes that listening to and addressing the views of interested parties at an early stage helps to identify issues of potential concern, explore solutions and ensure feedback

is taken into consideration in the subsequent development of the project and EIA. This helps to deliver a better project and a more robust EIA. As such, in addition to the formal scoping consultation that the consenting authorities will conduct, North Channel Wind held a voluntary public consultation on the Offshore Scoping Report in May/June 2023.¹

This report outlines the consultation that took place, summarises the feedback received during the consultation and describes North Channel Wind's response to the feedback.

¹ Note that the voluntary public consultation featured the Offshore Scoping Report and accompanying HRA Report dated May 2023. The consenting authorities (Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and Department for Infrastructure (DFI)) subsequently advised that they would scope the offshore and onshore elements of the projects in parallel, therefore the Offshore Scoping Report and HRA Report were updated by NCW and re-submitted at the same time as the Onshore Scoping Report submission in January 2024. The main change to the content of the Offshore Scoping Report between May 2023 and January 2024 was a reduction to the size of the Export Cable Corridor Areas of Search for both NCW 1 and NCW 2.

2. Consultation process

2.1. Approach to stakeholder engagement & consultation

The purpose of this first phase of public consultation was to introduce the North Channel Wind projects and begin a dialogue with local communities and other stakeholders which will continue throughout the development of the project. It allowed us to share early proposals, the Offshore Scoping Report, and provided the opportunity for feedback.

Engaging early will help to improve the quality of the proposed projects and EIA by considering stakeholder opinions and addressing, where possible, issues raised.

North Channel Wind is committed to finding effective ways to engage with stakeholders, and to refine the process in response to feedback received. Our approach to stakeholder engagement involves the following key components:

- **Identify:** identification of those stakeholders with an interest in, or who might potentially be affected by, the Proposed Development;
- **Communicate:** provide information to stakeholders on the Proposed Development, its potential effects, and information about the consultation and development process.
- **Consult:** provide the opportunity for stakeholders to give information and feedback, record views and potential concerns about the project and the consultation process.
- **Communicate feedback:** provide information to stakeholders detailing the results of the consultation and provide responses to any concerns raised, along with follow up actions as appropriate.
- **Repeat and refine** - Stakeholder engagement is an ongoing process. The engagement process will be refined in response to feedback received.

2.2. Identification of stakeholders

North Channel Wind undertook desk-based research to identify stakeholders who might have an interest in or potentially be affected by the proposals. Those identified included:

- National and local authorities, Government and regulatory agencies
- Elected representatives:
 - MPs (East Antrim, North Down, North Antrim, Strangford, South Antrim, South Down, Belfast North and East)
 - MLAs (East Antrim, North Down, North Antrim, Strangford, South Antrim, South Down, Belfast North and East)
 - Elected council representatives (Mid & East Antrim Council – all wards; Ards & North Down Council – all wards; Causeway Coast & Glens Council – The Glens ward; Newry, Mourne & Down – Downpatrick ward, The Mournes ward).
- Local community organisations (e.g. community associations, community centres, churches, local environmental and recreational groups located in NI coastal communities within an approximate 20km radius of the projects)
- Other users of the sea (e.g. commercial fishing, angling, diving, recreational boating stakeholders)
- Interest organisations (e.g. environment, conservation, heritage groups, research bodies)

- Supply chain/industry
- Electricity transmission and distribution operators
- Other offshore renewable energy developers
- Residents (in NI coastal communities within an approximate 20km radius of the projects)

This first phase of public consultation focused on Northern Ireland, however it is intended to include consultation with appropriate stakeholders in other jurisdictions as the EIA progresses.

2.3. Communication and consultation

Following the identification of potential stakeholders, the methods for communicating information and consulting stakeholders were defined. This consisted of two main elements: in-person public exhibition events held in coastal areas in the vicinity of the two projects and a virtual exhibition, held online from the project website.

The public consultation ran from 31st May 2023 to 28th June 2023 inclusive.

In addition to this a number of briefing and engagement meetings were held with stakeholder groups in the months before the public consultation, including elected representatives, commercial fisheries, local councils, environmental groups and sea users.

2.3.1. Public exhibitions

Locations

The following public exhibitions were held:

Date and time	Location
Wednesday 31 st May, 2pm-8pm	Glenlough Community Centre, Carnlough
Thursday 1 st June, 2pm-8pm	The Gobbins Centre, Islandmagee
Friday 2 nd June, 2pm-8pm	Hamilton Road Community Hub, Bangor

These three locations were chosen to provide a good geographical spread along the coastline in the vicinity of the projects. All venues were visited in advance to ensure suitable and accessible space and facilities including nearby parking for visitors travelling by car.

The exhibitions were scheduled at the start of the consultation period to allow plenty of time for people to provide feedback or ask follow-up questions after the events, before the consultation closed.

The exhibitions ran from 2pm until 8pm to allow for people to attend outside usual working hours. Refreshments and plenty of seating were available. Quizzes and colouring sheets were provided for children.

A total of 97 visitors attended the exhibitions over the three days: 33 in Carnlough, 29 in Islandmagee and 35 in Bangor.

Information banners

The exhibition included 13 information banners covering the following topics. A copy of the information banners is included in Appendix A.

- Welcome information introducing the project and exhibition
- About the developer, SBM Offshore
- Project location and development approach
- Northern Ireland's aspiration for offshore wind, including policy context and benefits
- Project status and estimated development timeline
- How electricity is generated from offshore wind
- Description of the offshore development
- Description of the onshore development
- The Environmental Impact Assessment process, surveys and studies
- Fishing engagement
- Community and supply chain benefits
- About the consultation, how to give feedback, next steps and ongoing engagement

Photomontages

Computer generated visualisations, called photomontages, were displayed on boards to show the viewer what NCW 1 and NCW 2 could look like from different viewpoints along the coastline. For each project (NCW 1 and NCW 2), from a number of viewpoints, the photomontages showed two different indicative wind turbine array layouts to represent the turbine design envelope included in the offshore scoping report:

NCW 1:

- Array showing 46 x 22 megawatt turbines (290m rotor diameter)
- Array showing 68 x 15 megawatt turbines (240m rotor diameter)

NCW 2:

- Array showing 19 x 22 megawatt turbines (290m rotor diameter)
- Array showing 28 x 15 megawatt turbines (240m rotor diameter)

360-degree photomontage viewer

In addition to the printed photomontages, attendees were able to look at the wind farms layouts in the context of a 360-degree views from each viewpoint. This virtual photomontage viewer is available in the North Channel Wind Virtual Consultation Room and was made available at the public exhibitions via a laptop and large TV screen.

Animated fly-through video

An animated video showing a narrated 'fly-through' of the proposed NCW 1 and NCW 2 turbine arrays was played on a loop throughout the exhibitions. The video shows the turbines in relative to the County Antrim and North Down coastlines.

Scoping report and habitat regulations screening report

Several hard copies of the Offshore Scoping Report and Habitat Regulations Screening Report were available for viewing at the exhibitions.

Feedback forms & enquiry forms

Feedback Forms were available for attendees to provide their views. The Feedback Form contains 10 questions seeking people's views on the projects, the consultation and renewables/offshore wind in general. There are further questions asking if respondents would like North Channel Wind to keep in

touch. A copy of the Feedback Form is included in the Appendix B. The feedback received is summarised in section 3.

Enquiry Forms were also available for members of the public to fill in as an alternative to speaking to a staff member, and as a way to record queries requiring follow-up.

North Channel Wind project team

Eight team members representing the North Channel Wind project, as well as the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) and Communications support, were present at each exhibition covering consenting, environment, grid, engineering, stakeholder, communications, supply chain and fisheries. The team was available to talk to attendees and answer questions.

2.3.2. Online exhibition / Virtual Consultation Room

In addition to the three public exhibition events, a Virtual Consultation Room was created so that members of the public could view the exhibition online.

The Virtual Consultation Room was accessible from the Consultation Page on the North Channel Wind website www.northchannelwind.com/consultation. It opened on 31st May to coincide with the first public exhibition.

The Consultation Page also linked directly to the Offshore Scoping Report and the Feedback form, allowing quicker access to users. Users were invited to contact the Stakeholder Manager or Project Coordinator if they were having difficulties accessing the online information or to request digital or hard copy of the material.

During the consultation period the Consultation Page was viewed 580 times by 191 unique users.

The Virtual Consultation Room contained the information boards, photomontages, 360-degree photomontage viewer, animated fly-through video, Offshore Scoping Report and Habitat Regulations Screening Report, which were all described in the previous section of this report. The Virtual Consultation Room also featured three videos of North Channel Wind team members talking introducing the projects and talking about their roles.

Online feedback form

The Virtual Consultation Room contained a link to an online version of the Feedback Form, where viewers could submit their views. Contact details of the Stakeholder Manager and Project Coordinator were provided in case viewers wanted to ask questions or get in touch.

A Supply Chain Form was also linked, inviting local businesses to be added to the North Channel Wind supply chain database. A printout of the Supply Chain Form is contained in Appendix C.

Although the consultation period lasted from 31st May to 28th June the Virtual Consultation Room has remained available to view on the North Channel Wind website.

Images from the Virtual Consultation Room are available in Appendix D.

2.3.3. Publicising the consultation

The consultation was publicised in a number of different ways to help reach the identified stakeholder groups identified in section 2.2.

Leaflet – direct mail

A two-page colour leaflet was prepared to introduce the North Channel Wind projects and the public consultation, inform the reader about the local public exhibitions and the online exhibition, and to provide contact details.

Approximately 300 hard copies of the leaflet were sent to recipients by post and approximately 320 digital copies were sent to recipients by email. In addition to this, the information was also communicated by phone to a number of stakeholders who had provided only phone numbers. The leaflet recipients included all of the stakeholder groups listed in section 2.2 with the exception of local residents. It was decided that a combination of printed and online newspaper adverts in addition to distributing the leaflets to community organisations, churches and sports clubs in the local areas would provide sufficient coverage for local residents.

A copy of the leaflet is contained in Appendix E.

Newspaper adverts

Quarter page full colour adverts were placed in the following print newspapers. These titles were chosen due to their geographical readership in coastal communities within approximately 20km of NCW 1 and NCW 2. The adverts also appeared in the online editions. A copy of the advert is included in Appendix F.

Publication	Date(s)
Ballymena Guardian	24 th May; 1 st June
Larne Times	25 th May
Carrick Times	25 th May
Coleraine Times	24 th May
Ballymena & Antrim Times	23 rd May
Down Spectator	25 th May
Newtownards Chronicle	25 th May

Press release

Press releases were issued to announce the consultation to local and national media in advance of the exhibitions. The releases included information about the location of the proposed projects, the dates, times and venues of the public exhibitions, the online exhibition, and contacted details for the North Channel Wind team.

Copies of the press releases are contained in Appendix G.

The news was covered by the News Letter (25th May), The Irish Times (29th May), The County Down Spectator (1st June) and sailing and boating website www.Afloat.ie.

Website news page

A news piece was published in the news section of the North Channel Wind website on 19th May to highlight the upcoming public exhibitions. The releases included the dates, times and venues of the

public exhibitions, details of the online exhibition, and contact details for the North Channel Wind team. A further news piece was published mid-way through the consultation period on 15th June to remind viewers that the consultation was open.

2.3.4. Stakeholder meetings and briefings

North Channel Wind understands the value of building and maintaining strong relationships with stakeholders throughout the life of a project, and this is maximised by engagement at an early stage. North Channel Wind began consulting with statutory and non-statutory consultees from the inception of the projects.

For example, a key stakeholder group is the commercial fishing industry. Meetings have been held with NIFPO and ANIFPO to discuss the project, gain feedback on the impact of the proposals to the fishing community and discuss communication going forward. This resulted in the agreement of a scope of works for a Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO), a role which was subsequently appointed in 2022. A number of subsequent introductory meetings were held with fishermen from the ports of Ardglass, Bangor, Kilkeel, Larne and Portavogie, and the Clyde Fishermen's Association. The issues raised by the fishermen were included in the Offshore Scoping Report commercial fisheries chapter to ensure they are fully considered in the project development and EIA.

A summary of the engagement and briefings to date is included below.

Stakeholder	Purpose of stakeholder engagement
DAERA	Marine licence pre-application engagement to provide an overview of the project, discuss EIA scoping, consultation, and survey methodologies.
Department for the Economy	To provide an overview of the project and project updates. To discuss progress of the OREAP Steering Committee and Working Groups.
Department for Infrastructure (DFI)	To provide an overview of the project and project updates, engagement about planning requirements including Section 26 and EIA scoping.
Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland	To provide an overview of the project and project updates and discuss regulatory requirements.
SONI	To provide an overview of the project and regular project updates. Discussions about progressing a grid connection application for North Channel Wind.
Northern Ireland Electricity	To provide an overview of the project and regular project updates. Discussions about grid connection requirements.
ANIFPO	Meetings to provide an overview and introduction to the project and subsequent project updates, gain feedback on the impact of the proposed projects to the fishing community, discuss communication and engagement going forward.
NIFPO	Meetings to provide an overview and introduction to the project and subsequent project updates, gain feedback on the impact of the proposed projects to the fishing community, discuss communication and engagement going forward.

Stakeholder	Purpose of stakeholder engagement
Invest NI	Discuss Invest NI plans to support offshore sector and options for joint projects of common interest.
RSPB	Meeting to introduce the project.
Ulster Wildlife Trust and NIMTF	Meetings to discuss joint projects to support environmental enhancement and introduce the wind farm project.
NI Marine Task Force	Meeting to introduce the project and discuss engagement.
National Trust	Meeting to introduce the project.
National Energy Action	Meeting to introduce the project.
AFBI	To provide an introduction to the project, and subsequent project updates, and discuss AFBI's marine research.
Fishing engagement meeting - Larne	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project to the fishermen and listen to feedback.
Fishing engagement meeting - Kilkeel	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project to the fishermen and listen to feedback.
Fishing engagement meeting - Ardglass	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project to the fishermen and listen to feedback.
Fishing engagement meeting - Bangor	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project to the fishermen and listen to feedback.
Clyde Fishermen's Association	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project, gather initial feedback and learn about the CFA's activities.
Fishing engagement meeting - Portavogie	Initial stakeholder meeting to introduce the project to the fishermen and listen to feedback.
Maritime Coastguard Agency	To provide an overview of the project, gain feedback on the potential shipping and navigation impacts of the proposed projects.
Invest Northern Ireland Maritime Cluster	Presentation delivered to introduce the project to cluster members.
Causeway Coast & Glens Council – Planning Department	Meeting to introduce the project and listen to feedback.

Stakeholder	Purpose of stakeholder engagement
Mid & East Antrim Council – Development Plan Department	Meeting to introduce the project and listen to feedback.
Ards & North Down Council – Place Directorate	Meeting to introduce the project and listen to feedback.
Ards & North Down Council – Place & Prosperity Committee	Presentation delivered to introduce the project to committee members and answer questions.
Belfast City Council	Meeting with Green Economy department to introduce the project.
Various elected representatives	Meetings to introduce the project, listen to feedback and discuss community engagement.
Royal Yachting Association	Meetings to introduce the project, listen to feedback and discuss ongoing engagement.
Mid & East Antrim Council Harbour and Marinas Department	Meeting in Glenarm organised by the Harbour & Marinas Manager to enable their stakeholders to hear about the proposals including representatives from Glenarm Community Development Committee.
Commission for Irish lights	Meeting to introduce the project.
Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority	Meeting to introduce the project.
Mutual Energy	Introduction to the project and discussions about the Moyle Interconnector.
Foyle Port	Introduction to the project and discussion of infrastructure requirements going forward.
Belfast Harbour	Introduction to the project and discussion of infrastructure requirements going forward.
Larne Port	Introduction to the project and discussion of infrastructure requirements going forward.

2.3.5. Ongoing contacts and future consultation

Listening to and engaging with the public and our stakeholders is important at all stages of the development, not just during public consultation.

The North Channel Wind team remain available to talk with anyone who has questions and wishes to learn more about the project and will continue to engage in the months and years ahead.

- The North Channel Wind Stakeholder Manager, Fiona Stevens, is available throughout the development of the projects: fiona.stevens@northchannelwind.com 07380 426 114.
- SeaSource Offshore is the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) for North Channel Wind. The FLO is the primary point of contact and works to maintain strong lines of communication between the fishing industry and North Channel Wind. The FLO contact is Brian Chambers: flo2@seasource.com 07355 744 942.

Members of the public are able to sign-up to receive news updates via a contact page on the website: www.northchannelwind.com/contact.

The feedback received from this public consultation, together with the formal scoping opinion which will be issued by DAERA, will be used to inform further project design and the environmental impact assessment. North Channel Wind aims to hold a further public consultation during the environmental impact assessment process, during which the latest plans will be shared and there will be further opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback.

3. Feedback

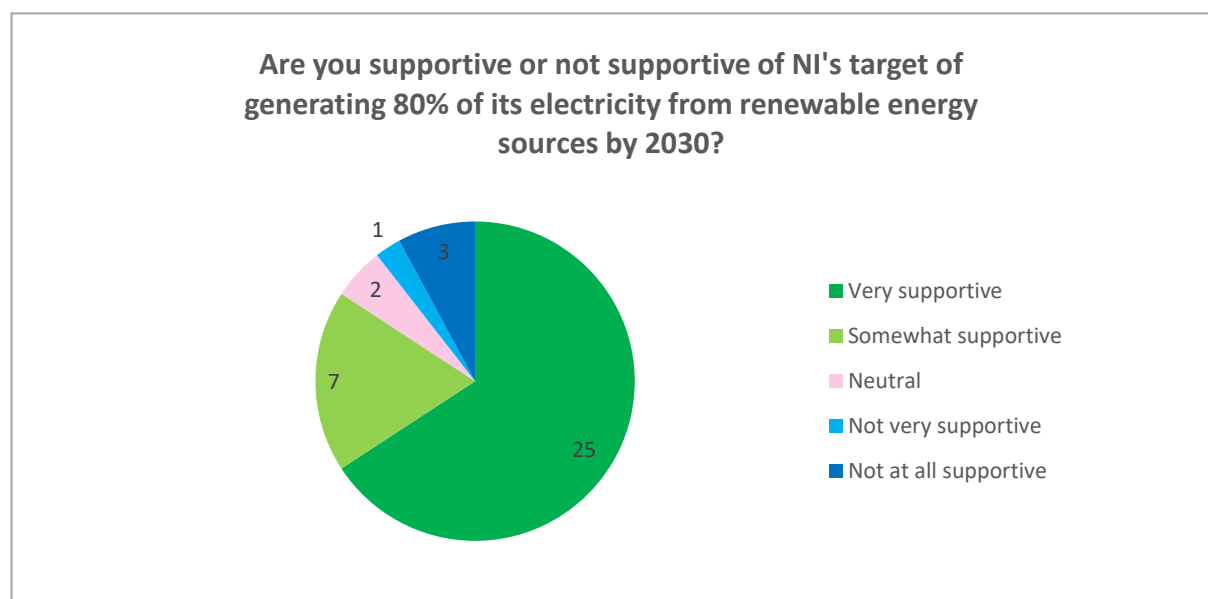
During the consultation people were able to submit feedback by filling in a Feedback Form, either at the public exhibitions or online. A copy of the Feedback Form is in Appendix B. 38 Feedback Forms were received in total. Feedback in other formats, (i.e. not using the Feedback Form) such as email, were also received. North Channel Wind received responses in other formats from 33 respondents, including questions, comments and observations.

Feedback Form questions 1, 2, 3, 4 & 9 were multiple choice style questions. Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10 were open-ended questions where respondents could free-type or write their responses in their own words. Questions 11 to 16 were about keeping in touch, contact details and consent and are not presented in this report.

3.1. Responses to multiple choice questions

3.1.1. Question 1: Views on renewable energy targets

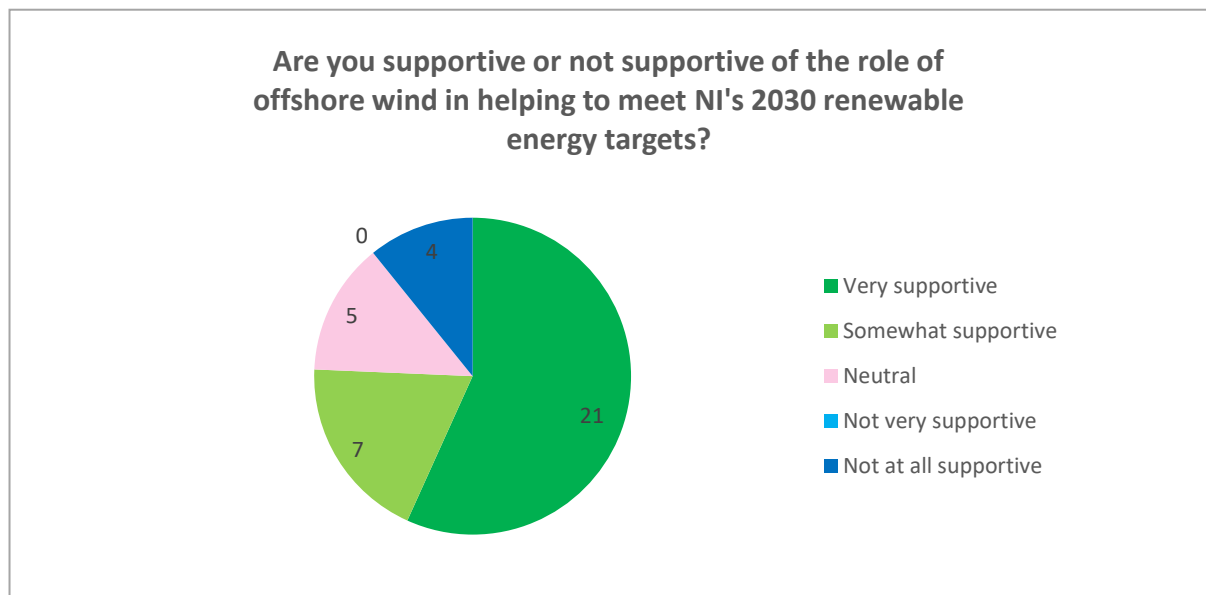
Question 1: Are you supportive or not supportive of Northern Ireland's target of generating 80% of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030?



66% responded Very supportive; 18% responded Somewhat supportive; 5% responded Neutral; 2% responded Not very supportive; 8% responded Not at all supportive.

3.1.2. Question 2: Views on the role of offshore wind

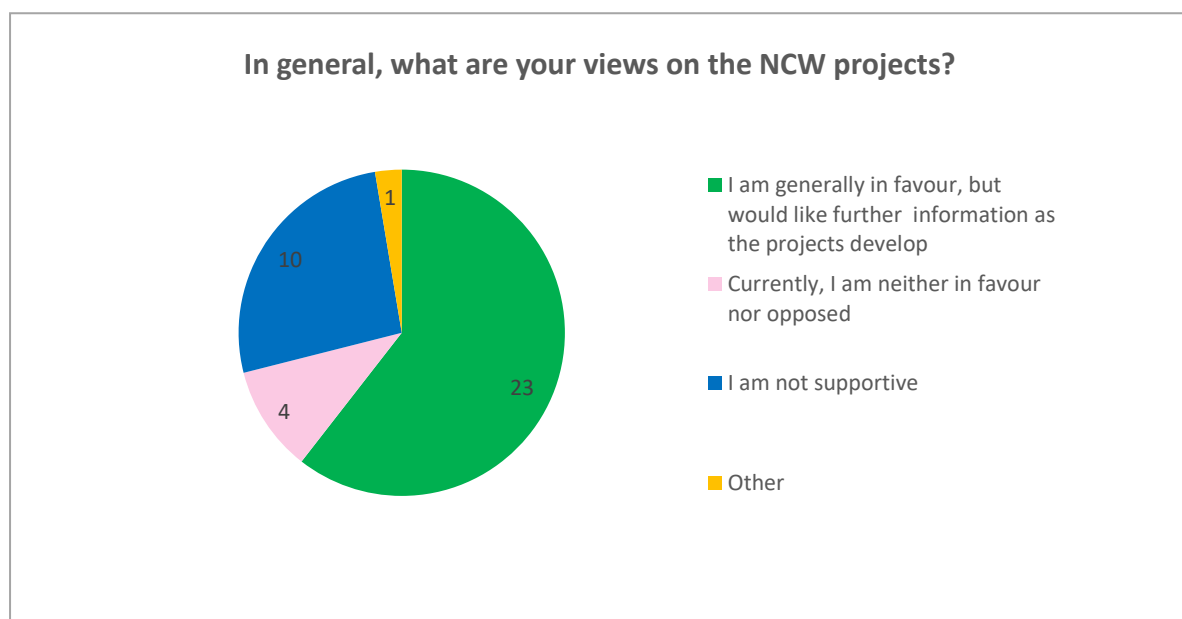
Question 2: Are you supportive or not supportive of the role of offshore wind in helping to meet our 2020 renewable energy targets?



57% responded Very supportive; 19% responded Somewhat supportive; 13% responded Neutral; 0% responded Not very supportive; 11% responded Not at all supportive. One respondent did not answer this question.

3.1.3. Question 3: Views on the North Channel Wind projects

Question 3: In general, what are your views on the North Channel Wind projects?



61% responded Generally in favour but would like more information as the projects develop; 11% responded Currently I am neither in favour nor opposed; 26% responded I am not supportive; 3% responded Other.

Question 3 allowed respondents who selected 'other' to enter a written comment to explain their view. The one respondent who selected 'other' commented that there was inadequate time to review the proposals.

3.1.4. Question 4: Views on the most important factors to consider

Question 4: What do you think are the most important factors that you would like us to consider as we progress the design of the North Channel Wind projects?

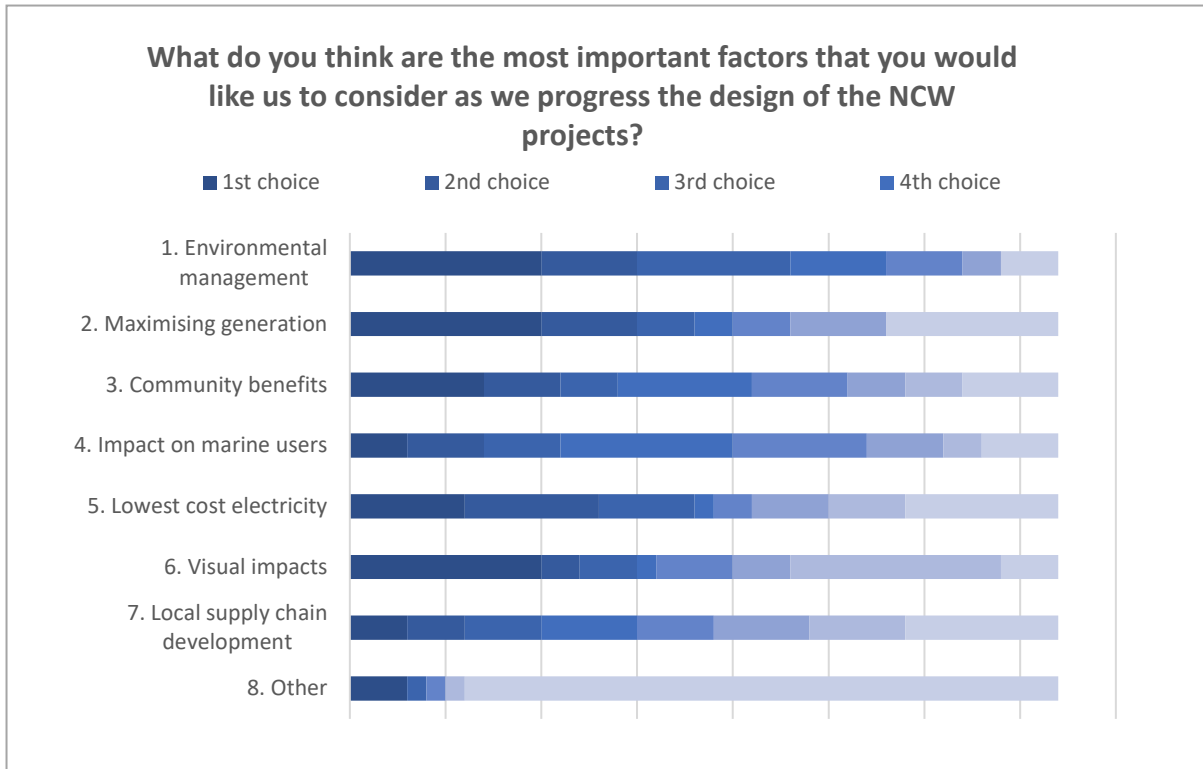
Respondents were asked to rank eight different factors in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important. The factors were:

- Benefits for local communities
- Environmental management
- Visual impacts
- Delivering the lowest cost electricity to consumers
- Maximising the generation of renewable electricity
- Development of local supply chain
- Impacts on marine users
- Other

A text box was provided to allow respondents to nominate a factor under 'other' that was not already listed as an option.

Any boxes left blank were awarded a rank of 8 (least importance). Some respondents ticked/crossed boxes and left others blank rather than provide a ranking/order of preference. In these cases, all ticked boxes were awarded a rank of 1 (most importance) and all blank boxes were awarded 8 (least importance).

Overall, 'environmental management' scored as the most important factor, followed by 'maximising renewable electricity generation'. 'Other' scored as the least important factor. The chart below shows a breakdown of the importance rankings received by each factor (1st choice through to 8th choice). The factors are listed in rank order (1 to 8) of overall importance based on the results.

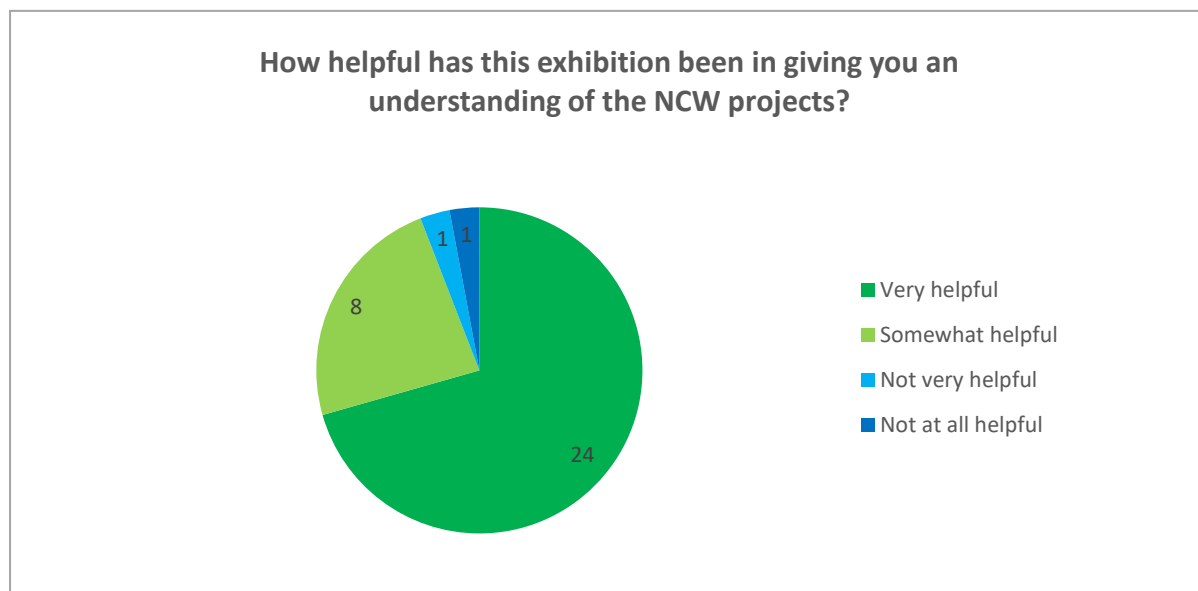


Factors that were recorded by respondents under the 'other' category included:

- Putting nature at the core of planning
- Noise
- Impacts on tourism and the local socio-economy due to visual impacts
- Impacts on marine life
- Impacts on landscape and visual amenity for residents and visitors
- Commitment to local communities for employment and suppliers
- Improvement of the grid for other renewable energy projects and facilitation of electrification and electric vehicles.

3.1.5. Question 9: Feedback on the exhibition

Question 9: How helpful has this exhibition been in giving you an understanding of the North Channel Wind projects?²



71% responded Very helpful; 24% responded Somewhat helpful; 3% responded Not very helpful; 3% responded Not at all helpful. Four respondents left this question blank.

3.2. Responses to open-ended questions and feedback in other formats

Questions 5, 6, 7, 8 & 10 were open-ended style questions inviting respondents to provide feedback in response to the following:

- *Question 5: Do you have any questions about the North Channel Wind development consent process?*
- *Question 6: Do you have any comments on the North Channel Wind Scoping Report? Are there any other factors to consider?*
- *Question 7: Please provide any specific feedback on North Channel Wind 1 that you would like the team to consider.*
- *Question 8: Please provide any specific feedback on North Channel Wind 2 that you would like the team to consider.*
- *Question 10: Have you any suggestions for how our exhibitions could be improved?*

Feedback received is summarised below, grouped by topic area (e.g. landscape & visual, economics). The summary below also contains any feedback relating to that topic which was submitted in other

² 4 respondents left this blank.

formats, such as by email. Where comments relate specifically to either NCW 1 or NCW 2, this is stated at the end of each topic section.

3.2.1. Consenting and EIA

A number of questions were asked about consenting requirements and process for the NCW projects. One respondent requested clarification on whether a planning application would be submitted, who would adjudicate on this given that it is offshore, and what the roles of Mid & East Antrim Council, the Department for Infrastructure and The Crown Estate would be. One respondent commented that they would like to see a timeline for development. A number of respondents asked when the next round of public consultation would be and would the public be kept informed of progress. Another respondent asked when the marine licence application would be submitted.

Project team response:

A number of permissions and licences will need to be obtained in order for the NCW 1 and 2 projects to be built:

Marine Licence: The offshore elements of the projects, including the wind turbines, inter-array cables, export cable and offshore substation, will require a marine licence, for which applications are made to DAERA.

Planning Permission: The onshore elements of the projects, including landfall, the underground onshore cabling and onshore substation, will require planning permission. Planning applications for the majority of developments are made to the local councils, however applications for regionally significant projects are made to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI). We understand that the project is likely to be deemed regionally significant under the NI Planning Regulations and therefore the application will be made to DFI.

The consent applications will be accompanied by a number of important documents including: a detailed Environmental Statement, which will describe the EIA that was conducted for all elements of the project, onshore and offshore; a Navigation Risk Assessment and, a Habitat Regulations Assessment. We currently estimate submitting the applications for the marine licence and planning permission in 2026. Once submitted, the relevant consenting authority will formally consult with a wide range of organisations on the marine licence and planning permission applications, including the local councils.

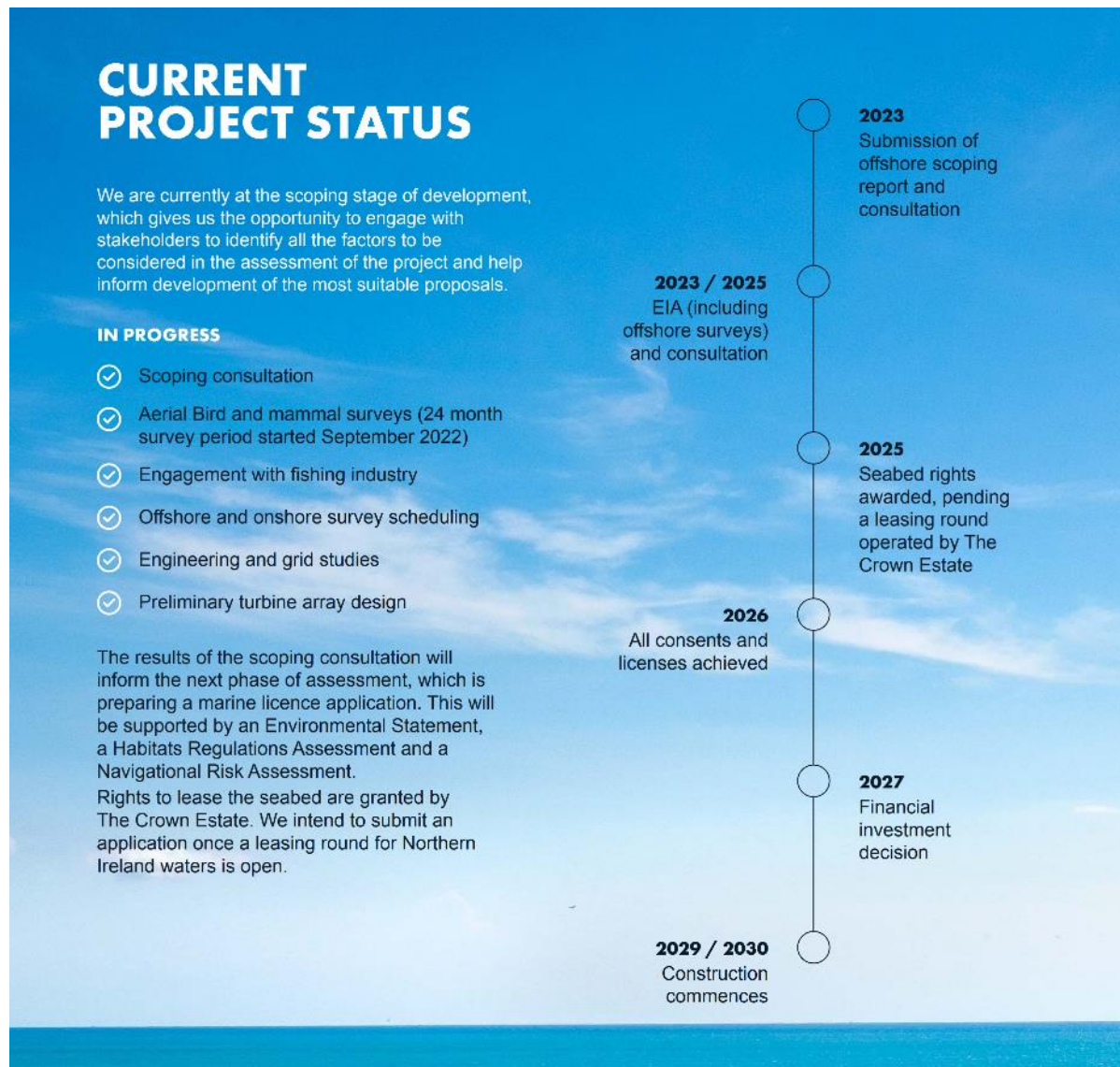
Article 39 and Generation Licence: In addition, the project will require consent to construct a generating station under Article 39 of the Electricity Order, which is issued by Department for the Economy (DfE) and an electricity generation licence, which is issued by the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland (UREGNI).

Seabed Lease: A seabed lease will need to be granted by The Crown Estate. The Crown Estate is currently engaged with DfE through the Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan (OREAP) process to plan a leasing round which is likely to be specific to Northern Ireland.

An estimated timeline for the development process is included on our website www.northchannelwind.com/timeline and was included as an information board in the physical and online exhibitions. A copy of the information board is below. It should be noted that timings for a leasing round by The Crown Estate and for the consenting process are estimates, and therefore may differ from what is shown. The team will update the timeline on the project website as and when any changes are known.

Progress updates will be provided to stakeholders, including any members of the public who have signed-up to receive project updates or indicated that they would like to be contacted again/keep in touch. This will include details of future consultations, although any stakeholders, including members of the public, are welcome to contact us at any time.

We envisage the next phase of public consultation on the offshore elements of the project will take place during the EIA process, so that further comments may be taken into account before the EIA is concluded and the consent applications are submitted.



3.2.2. Site selection

A number of respondents queried why the locations of the NCW 1 and 2 sites had been selected, primarily in relation to the visual impact, distance from the coast and wind resource.

Various suggestions with regard to alternative locations were made, including the west or north coasts of Northern Ireland due to their wind resource and the possibility of being located at a greater distance from the coastline, bringing the turbines onshore and consideration of tidal energy.

One respondent suggested that thought be given to smaller wind farms in various locations further from shore, (20% Glens, 20% Ards, 20% North Coast, 20% on land and 20% other means to reduce reliability on wind) to limit the impact in any one place. They expressed the view that this was preferable to having the turbines all in one place, which they considered to be for maximum ease and profit. The respondent said that North Channel Wind need to make the public more aware of key drivers for the site selection, suggesting that one of the main factors driving the site selection appeared to be providing as short of a cable run as possible to Ballylumford Power Station to limit costs of construction.

Project team response

The reasons why the project locations were selected were described on of the information boards in the public exhibition: 'Project Location and Development approach, Why the North Channel?' which says:

Many factors are taken into consideration when identifying areas suitable for floating offshore wind farms. North Channel Wind has undertaken comprehensive work to determine the optimum area for the development of commercial floating offshore wind projects. These include: The availability of good wind resource; Potential to connect to the electricity grid; The constraints in Northern Ireland territorial waters; Absence of hard constraints, such as areas already leased by the State for other uses; International shipping routes; Water depth or unfavourable seabed conditions; Environmental, technical and economic considerations.

The combination of all the above factors are the main reasons why we have identified the North Channel as an excellent location for a floating offshore wind development.

Further detail on the site selection is provided in the Offshore Scoping Report, Chapter 1.3.

The proximity of the wind farm to a major electricity demand hub is indeed one of the considerations informing site selection, as stated in the public exhibition information. A shorter length of subsea electricity transmission cable can potentially reduce environmental impact and cost of construction and maximises the efficiency in bringing the electricity to shore. Operational costs are also reduced due to ease of access for maintenance and reduced transmission losses. Cost reductions in the delivery of projects like this ultimately reduce the cost of energy to the consumer. However careful assessment of all aspects of the proposed sites, cable corridors and constraints will continue throughout the EIA. The final Environmental Statement will include a detailed description of the site selection process, and how the project design has evolved, including the consideration of alternatives.

Tidal developments around the north coast of Northern Ireland have been investigated in the past, however they did not proceed due to lack of grid connection and tidal technology. Northern Ireland currently has over 1.3 gigawatts of onshore wind installed capacity, which plays a vital role in helping to decarbonise electricity generation in Northern Ireland. However offshore wind is also needed to deliver at the scale and pace needed to meet the Government's future renewable electricity targets. As well as there being more space offshore, capacity factors are typically much higher offshore than onshore, maximising electricity generation.

3.2.3. Seascape, landscape and visual

Concerns were raised by some respondents about the landscape and visual impact of both projects. This included fears of destroying the natural beauty of the area and visual impacts on residents and visitors to the coast road.

One respondent commented that the location and scale of the proposals were entirely inappropriate. Concerns were raised over the impact on 'cherished' views of Argyll, Kintyre and Islay.

NCW 1

In relation to NCW 1 specifically, concerns raised included the significant visual impact on Northern Ireland's eastern seaboard and impacts on rural life and visitors to Portmuck. The impact on the Glens of Antrim Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was raised, with one respondent particularly mentioning Glenariffe, as Queen of the Glens, renowned worldwide. One respondent asked what steps were being taken to minimise the visual impact of the scheme. Another commented that some visualisations from Scotland would be useful.

NCW 2

In relation to NCW 2, one respondent commented that the proposals were very close to shore and suggested that smaller rotors be considered to minimise visual impact.

Another respondent expressed the opinion that NCW 2 was much more acceptable than NCW 1 in respect of scale and distance from the shore and its non-AONB location. The respondent felt that it would not impact on tourism as much. The respondent however questioned the suitability of a wind turbine 325m tall that isn't at least 100km out to sea, referencing Dogger Bank wind farm as an example.

Another respondent commented that careful analysis of the benefits of the project was necessary against the potential impacts of the projects on the natural beauty and wildness of the environment and industrialisation of the site. The respondent referred to the project becoming another potential eye-sore, in addition to the existing Kilroot Power Station.

Project team response

The EIA will include a comprehensive Seascape, Landscape & Visual Resources Assessment (SLVRA) prepared by chartered landscape architects in accordance with best practice guidance. The approach to the assessment is set out in Chapter 15 of the Offshore Scoping report.

For the scoping consultation, indicative photomontages were prepared from six different viewpoints to show viewers what the proposed wind turbines could look like from different locations along the Antrim and Down coastlines (Cushendun, Carnlough, Portmuck, Whitehead, Crawfordsburn and Donaghadee). These were included within the Offshore Scoping Report and were displayed in the public and online exhibitions. These visualisations will be updated and added to as the SLVRA progresses.

Impacts on designated landscapes within the study area, including the Glens of Antrim AONB, will be thoroughly examined as part of this assessment.

Portmuck also falls within the study area and impacts on visual amenity of residents and visitors will be included in the assessment. Photomontages of what the proposed NCW 1 wind farm might look like from Portmuck were included in the Offshore Scoping Report and were on display in the public

and online exhibitions. Other topics that will be considered in relation to local populations, where relevant, include noise, vibration, air quality, employment, economics and tourism.

Parts of Scotland fall within the study area for the SLVRA and the updated visualisations prepared for the EIA will include viewpoints on the Scottish coastline.

Offshore wind turbines are large and the project team appreciates that visual impact will be of concern to some stakeholders. The size of the turbines enables them to generate significant quantities of renewable electricity, helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve the security of our energy supplies.

In relation to rotor sizes, the offshore wind turbine market is evolving all the time. North Channel Wind is using a design envelope approach in its scoping report, which sets a minimum and maximum rotor diameter based on our estimations of the turbine sizes that will be available in the market should the projects be built in the years to come. The design envelope approach allows for this flexibility, whilst ensuring that the potential effects on the environment of the whole envelope is fully considered in the EIA.

3.2.4. Ornithology & marine life

Several respondents highlighted a concern over the potential impact of the wind farms on birds and marine wildlife.

One respondent queried if it would be possible to shut down turbines during important migration periods for birds and fish.

Project team response

Detailed studies are underway to assess the impacts of the proposals on wildlife, including bird and mammal surveys, which started in 2022 and will continue until 2024. The results from these surveys and assessments will inform the design of the wind farms and will be reported in a comprehensive Environmental Statement. A Habitat Regulations Assessment will also be prepared which will consider the potential impacts of the projects on protected species and nature conservation sites. Both of these documents will be submitted in support of the application for development consent.

The approach to assessing impacts on wildlife is detailed in the Offshore Scoping Report Chapters 7 to 11 covering: Benthic Subtidal and Intertidal Ecology; Fish and Shellfish Ecology; Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles; Offshore and Intertidal Ornithology; and Commercial Fisheries. A Habitat Regulations Screening assessment has also been prepared and is available in the virtual consultation room via the project website, www.northchanelwind.com/consultation.

It is too early to determine what further mitigation measures and future monitoring is required, for example turbine shut down during important migration periods for birds and fish, however the need for such measures will be thoroughly considered through the EIA process. There have been many decades of research into interactions between migrating birds and offshore wind and best practice will be incorporated into our proposals as appropriate.

3.2.5. Socio-economic and community benefit

Various comments were received in relation to socio-economic considerations and community benefits.

One respondent asked what the impact would be on the local economy and how many jobs would be created. Another respondent asked if North Channel Wind could investigate ways to help develop very local coastal communities as part of a social aspect of the development. The respondent expressed the wish to see a set up with all local community groups, with funding for local charities to help them keep running in the future. Another respondent asked if there was a proposed community benefit package and who it would be managed by. Consideration of legacy management post decommissioning was raised by another respondent, in relation to use of local infrastructure created to support the wind farms.

Impact on tourism and the local economy, due to visual impact from the wind farms, was raised as a concern.

One respondent expressed the view that the socioeconomic section of the Offshore Scoping Report was short and queried the accuracy and origin of a statistic within the report that 5% of visiting tourists to Northern Ireland visit Mid and East Antrim. The respondent claimed that almost half of all tourists visiting Northern Ireland pass through the Glens of Antrim on their way to the Causeway Coast and that tour buses go out of their way to increase their journey time by over 1 hour just to include the Glens of Antrim because it is so desirable to tourists. The respondent went on to comment that the footfall in the Glens of Antrim is an integral part of the Causeway Coast and shouldn't be considered in isolation. They expressed that percentage statistics may be attributed to quantifiable factors like ticket entries into the Causeway Visitor Centre, but they do not account for the many thousands of people stopping in Ballygally, Glenarm, Carnlough or Cushendun etc. on their way to the Causeway.

The respondent raised a concern that the NCW 1 and NCW 2 sites are located in the less affluent areas of Northern Ireland's coastline and that house prices would be negatively affected.

Project team response

North Channel Wind would be Northern Ireland's largest generator, bringing substantial investment to the local economy, supporting the development of a local supply chain and job creation. We will seek to maximise the benefit to Northern Ireland by activating the local supply chain, engaging with local businesses and supporting skills and training.

The EIA will include a full socioeconomic assessment of the proposed projects, the approach to which is set out in Chapter 17: Population & Human Health of the Offshore Scoping Report. The socioeconomic assessment will include two geographical areas, one local and one regional. The local socio-economic study area will cover the coastline authorities of Mid & East Antrim Council and Ards & North Down Council. The regional study area will consider at impacts at the Northern Ireland level.

The socio-economic assessment will consider a range of issues, including the effects of the projects on employment and the economy during construction, operation and decommissioning of the projects, the effect on demand on housing and local services during construction, tourism, and recreation activity. The assessment will also draw on information provided in other sections of the EIA, including commercial fisheries, shipping and navigation, aviation, military and communications, marine archaeology, seascape landscape and visual resources, and infrastructure and other sea users.

We are currently at an early stage in the project and the EIA won't be finalised until 2026. However, a recent report by BVG Associates³, commissioned by Renewable NI, studied the potential impact on the Northern Ireland economy from installing 1.5 gigawatts of offshore wind. They found that 1.5 gigawatts of offshore wind could lead to up to £1.9 billion being spent with NI suppliers over the projects lifetime, could lead to up to £2.4 billion gross value added to the NI economy, and could create up to 32,400 full time equivalent job years for Northern Ireland suppliers. This report is based on theoretical developments, not the North Channel Wind projects specifically, but it shows the potential benefits that could result from offshore wind in general.

Regarding the query about consideration of legacy management post decommissioning, the EIA will assess the construction, operation and decommissioning of the wind farms. As such, the legacy aspect of the project following its decommissioning is out of scope of the EIA. However, we would comment that the socioeconomic benefits during the 35-year lifetime of the project will be substantial. The BVG Associates report estimated that around 71% of employment associated with offshore wind farms (in terms of full-time equivalent job years) occurs post-construction, which highlights the long-term nature of job creation in this sector.

The 5% statistic was clarified with the scoping report author and refers to the percentage of estimated expenditure on overnight trips in Northern Ireland that took place in Mid and East Antrim in 2019 (Northern Ireland Local Government District Tourism Statistics (2019)). This will be clarified in the scoping report and a reference added. The respondent's comments regarding the tourism section of the Offshore Scoping Report and the relationship between the Glens of Antrim and the Causeway Coast will be passed to the EIA consultant for consideration in the assessment.

The North Channel Wind team is not aware of any research showing that offshore wind farms affect house prices, therefore it is not proposed to include this topic in the socioeconomic assessment.

In relation to community benefits, North Channel Wind is committed to citizen engagement and will work closely with local communities throughout the development to maximise the benefit to the local area. There are various mechanisms and schemes to support communities in different jurisdictions. We plan to investigate best practice internationally, and through meaningful dialogue with communities and stakeholders, develop a bespoke process which will support local communities and other marine stakeholders. We will be in touch with local communities as the projects develops to discuss these themes further.

3.2.6. Shipping and navigation

A number of respondents asked for clarification on whether recreational vessels would be permitted to navigate in between the wind turbines.

Recreational sailing routes were mentioned between Northern Ireland and Scotland, including Groomsport to Port Patrick and Glenarm to Campbell Town. One respondent commented that Glenarm was sometimes used as a potential refuge in case of needing to get ashore quickly.

One respondent asked what the minimum distance would be between the sea and the blade tip.

³ The Clean Revolution: Building Northern Ireland's Offshore Wind Industry, BVG Associates, 2022 [The-Clean-Revolution—Building-Northern-Irelands-Offshore-Wind-Industry.pdf \(renewableni.com\)](https://renewableni.com/The-Clean-Revolution—Building-Northern-Irelands-Offshore-Wind-Industry.pdf)

Several respondents asked to be kept up to date as the Navigational Risk Assessment progresses.

Project team response

North Channel Wind are aware of the interest in this topic area and we thank stakeholders for their positive engagement.

We are keen to co-exist with other users of the sea and we expect that recreational boats will be able to pass through the wind turbines, which will be spaced around 1km apart. Navigational safety will be of principal concern when considering whether any safety zones are needed around the turbines and we will be undertaking a thorough Navigational Risk Assessment in keeping with Marine Guidance Note (MGN) 654. This will involve consultation with the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and other commercial and recreational marine stakeholders. Safety zones around turbines are typically granted by government during construction, for major maintenance and for decommissioning of an offshore wind development to preserve the safety of other users of the marine environment and the development itself. However once the wind farm is fully constructed and operating normally safety zones are only approved if there is a clear justification for their implementation.

As well as the Navigation Risk Assessment, the EIA will also examine potential effects on shipping and navigation. The approach to the assessment is set out in the Offshore Scoping Report Chapter: Shipping and Navigation.

The minimum clearance between the blade tip and the sea would be 22m above sea level. Depending on final turbine selection the clearance could be greater than this, however 22m would be the minimum.

North Channel Wind have met with the Royal Yachting Association, and have presented to boating stakeholders in Glenarm, including the Berth Holders Association, at the invitation of the Harbour and Marinas Manager of Mid & East Antrim Council. We will keep in touch with these stakeholders, including members of the public who have expressed an interest in this topic, and provide updates as the Navigational Risk Assessment progress.

3.2.7. Unexploded ordnance

One respondent asked what consideration had been given to the munitions dump in Beaufort Dyke.

Project team response

North Channel Wind is carrying out studies of the potential for unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the vicinity of the projects, including Beaufort Dyke, so that any potential risks can be taken into account in the future design of the projects. The munitions dump at Beaufort Dyke has been identified in the Offshore Scoping Report Chapter 16: Infrastructure and Other Users of the Sea. Injury or disturbance to marine mammals due to UXO clearance is covered in Offshore Scoping Report Chapter 9: Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles, Table 9.7.

3.2.8. Emergency plans

One respondent asked about what emergency plans for major incidents are in place.

Project team response

Comprehensive procedures for dealing with emergency response will be included in a detailed Construction Method Statement and/or Construction Environmental Management Plan, which will be included as part of the Environmental Statement. Emergency response is also considered various chapters within the EIA, including Aviation and Radar and Shipping & Navigation.

3.2.9. Infrastructure

Various questions were received about aspects of the wind farm infrastructure. These included: when will the number of wind turbines be firmed up; when will mitigation proposals be firmed up; will the connection of the wind farms to the electricity network require additional infrastructure at Kilroot; will the floating platforms for the turbines be built in Belfast; is there was anything to prevent the proposals being enlarged in Northern Ireland waters once established.

Project team response

In relation to turbine numbers, as described in the scoping report and exhibition materials, a Project Design Envelope (PDE) approach is being adopted for the NCW 1 and NCW 2 Projects. The PDE concept is routinely used in applications for development consent for offshore wind farms to allow for some flexibility in design options, and more particularly for foundations and turbine types, where the full details of a project are not known by the offshore renewable supply chain at the point of submission of an application for development consent. The PDE does however provide sufficient detail to enable all likely significant environmental effects to be identified, considered and mitigated as part of the EIA. The Environmental Statement will include our PDE for the NCW projects, which will contain the number of turbines proposed for the development.

Proposed mitigation measures will also be detailed in the Environmental Statement, including mitigation measures that have been built into the project design and any additional mitigation. All mitigation and monitoring will be listed as marine licence and/or planning permission conditions.

Work continues with NIE and the System Operator for NI (SONI) to establish the most suitable location for the electrical grid infrastructure. North Channel Wind is currently assessing multiple options in terms of engineering, environmental and land use planning characteristics. Our aim is to confirm the final onshore locations and provide additional information during future consultation phases during the EIA phase.

It is unknown as yet if the floating platforms will be built in Belfast. Facilities in relative proximity to the wind farms are desirable to reduce programmes and reduce vessel costs. Access is a critical factor, with unrestricted tidal access a large consideration. Large landside areas are also desirable to facilitate storage and assembly of major components. The exact port requirements for floating wind assembly will be dictated by the nature of the platform substructure proposed, in addition to project logistics. If the turbines are to be 'mated' (i.e. connected) to the substructure at the quayside a certain level of shelter will also be desirable.

North Channel Wind will identify and agree which ports and harbours will be used during the lifetime of project prior to construction. The projects have the advantage of having several well-equipped facilities in close proximity, including the Port of Belfast and Port of Larne.

In relation to future expansion, North Channel Wind has no plans to increase the development areas included within the Offshore Scoping Report. However, as outlined in section 3.2.1 of this report,

The Crown Estate is responsible for leasing rights to the seabed and they will determine which areas of the seabed will be open to applications, therefore it is possible that boundaries may change. If any boundary changes do occur, they will be fully considered and consulted upon through the EIA and consenting process.

3.2.10. Decommissioning

One respondent asked if decommissioning would include the removal of all infrastructure.

Project team response

The North Channel Wind projects are expected to have an operational lifetime of 35 years.

If granted a marine licence, the licence will confirm the operational period and will contain conditions for the decommissioning of the wind farm.

A detailed Decommissioning Programme will be developed and agreed with relevant authorities prior to construction. The Decommissioning Programme will include a description of the assets to be removed, methodology, cost estimates and details of securities to be put in place to fund the decommissioning activities and conduct appropriate surveying and monitoring. The Decommissioning Programme will be updated as required over the lifetime of the project in keeping with relevant guidelines and best practice and decommissioning activities will be compliant with the relevant legislation at that time.

As a baseline, decommissioning will mirror the installation process in reverse. However, innovations over the next several years as more industry experience is gained may result in more effective and cost-efficient methodologies. Any proposed updates to methodologies will be formally documented and agreed. Platforms and moorings will be removed from the wind farm and transported to local ports for disassembly and proper disposal, and the site will be made safe for navigation and other seabed users according to the requirements detailed in decommissioning guidance adopted by Northern Ireland. Engagement with regulators and stakeholders will be undertaken through the process.

3.2.11. Commercial / electricity markets

A number of respondents asked questions relating to the economics of the projects and market arrangements for offshore wind farms.

One respondent queried how renewable electricity would benefit consumers if the electricity market links the price of renewables to the price of fossil fuel electricity, and asked if these market arrangements are likely to change. The respondent queried what personal gain would result, aside from the carbon savings, given the potential impacts of the project. Another respondent asked if there will be a guaranteed price per kilowatt assured to the NCW projects. A third respondent asked how much of the project would be owned and controlled by people in Northern Ireland and whether there was any option for shared public ownership.

Project team response

Electricity generators in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are part of a Single Electricity Market (SEM). The crucial reason for why the price of gas is so influential comes from something called the 'merit order'. When every type of electricity generation type is available to meet demand, the system must decide which technology is brought online first. The good news is that renewables are

always chosen first when they are available because they are the cheapest to run. This is great for reducing emissions, but it is also logical to meet demand with the cheapest generators available at the time and help bring down peoples' bills. Gas typically sets the price of electricity because the electricity price is set by the marginal cost of the *last generating unit* to be turned off to meet demand – which is invariably a gas power plant with high marginal costs. So whilst the overall price of electricity is linked to gas, ultimately more renewables on the system will drive down the price. More information can be found in the video linked below. This was produced by Wind Energy Ireland, but since we operate in the SEM the same is true for Northern Ireland.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDsgLyqa3iQSQB8OGiLZu3MxnmUjtD9oU>

Unfortunately, we are not able to predict when oil/gas is decoupled from renewables in the overall market, however it is certainly something which is exercising the minds of policy makers, particularly in the context of recent energy crisis.

In relation to the guaranteed price per kW question, it is likely that support for floating offshore wind will be provided through a contract for difference (CFD) mechanism, where the project owner will be guaranteed a unit price for each unit of energy generated for a fixed duration, secured through competitive auction. This process has proven to deliver value for money in other jurisdictions, and it is important to note that under the current system, in cases where wholesale energy prices are higher than the agreed CFD price, the upside is paid back to the state. This has resulted in windfalls for consumers in recent years during the energy crisis.⁴

In terms of ownership, North Channel Wind is a wholly owned subsidiary of SBM Offshore, which is a Dutch listed company, but the development work on the projects is being carried out by Ireland-based company NMK Renewables. The consenting process for the wind farms will be managed by the government here in Northern Ireland, as set out in previous sections of this report, including the DAERA for marine licences, DfE and UREGNI for electricity construction and generation and DFI for planning permission for any onshore development. Once North Channel Wind submits the consent applications, these departments will consult with a range of expert bodies and the general public when considering the applications, so the decision on whether the projects are consented is made in Northern Ireland. In order to build and operate the wind farms we would also need to be granted a lease by The Crown Estate, which manages the seabed. Electricity generated from the wind farms will feed into the electricity network in Northern Ireland, which is managed by the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and NIE. As the projects will be in Northern Ireland waters, they will contribute towards Northern Ireland targets in terms of energy and climate change.

Shared public ownership is something we are interested in and will be exploring further during the development process.

3.2.12. Supply chain

A number of positive enquiries were received from local supply chain companies expressing interest in working on the project.

⁴ <https://theenergyst.com/wind-farms-to-pay-back-660-million-as-levies-lead-to-lower-costs/>

Project team response

North Channel Wind welcomes expressions of interest from supply chain companies. A Supply Chain Form has been created, which is available on our website at www.northchannelwind.com/supplier where companies can register their interest.

To help familiarise local supply chain companies with the opportunities in floating offshore wind, North Channel Wind collaborated with Invest NI to arrange a trade mission to France in February 2023. The visit, which was hosted by SBM Offshore, included a visit to the Provence Grand Large (PGL) assembly yard for floating wind turbine bases, at the port of Fos sur Mer, near Marseille. Representatives from Foyle Port and Belfast Harbour were briefed by SBM Offshore engineers on port logistics and requirements for assembling the floating bases.

North Channel Wind is keen to ensure that opportunities for local supply chain companies are maximised and will continue to work with Invest NI and other stakeholders.

3.2.13. Feedback on the exhibition and consultation process

A number of positive comments were received about the exhibitions, including the helpfulness and knowledge of the staff in attendance, and the layout and presentation of the information on display.

Positive comments were also made in relation to the NCW proposals, including the importance of the projects in meeting future targets for renewable electricity generation.

Some respondents made suggestions on how the advertisement of the consultations could be improved, including better signage on the roadside and venue entrances, more social media engagement, and more notice and publicity in general.

A number of comments were received in relation to the number and locations of exhibitions. One respondent suggested that more exhibitions be held at varying locations. Two respondents suggested that we should hold a public exhibition in Donaghadee, given that it is located closer to NCW 2 than the nearest exhibition in Bangor. A further respondent queried why there wasn't a consultation event on the Ards peninsula when the projects directly affect the fishing fleet.

One respondent asked what assessments and consultations had been incorporated into the plans to date and queried why more stakeholders had not been contacted directly, particularly recreational sea anglers and bodies, which they highlighted as equal stakeholders. They recommended finding invested community representatives to talk to and recommended that more time be given for respondents to review and respond to the consultation, given the length of the Offshore Scoping Report.

One respondent expressed the view that as a commercial enterprise the focus was on trying to sell the advantages of the scheme to the public and downplay the disadvantages whereas a more balanced approach, setting out the pros and cons of the scheme, would increase the credibility of the scoping exercise.

Another respondent commented that local engagement should continue even (or especially) through the difficult compromise decisions that will have to be made.

Project team response

Section 2.3.3 of this Consultation Report sets out how the public consultation and exhibitions were publicised. The North Channel Wind team is always looking to improve consultation practices and we are happy to take this feedback on board. We will look into ways to increase the publicity of future exhibitions. This could include, for example, increased use of social media, and talking to stakeholders about the most effective ways of getting the information out to their communities.

A number of signs and arrows were put up outside the venues to direct visitors to the exhibitions, however we are happy to increase the amount of signage for future exhibitions.

We thank respondents for their suggestions about the locations of the public exhibitions. This scoping consultation is the first in a number of engagement events we plan to hold during development of the NCW projects. As part of this, we plan to vary venues to ensure engagement with all communities within the vicinity of the projects.

In response to the feedback, the team investigated the possibility of arranging a public exhibition in Donaghadee as well as Bangor, however it wasn't possible to find an available venue of sufficient size in Donaghadee within the public consultation period. Numerous organisations within Donaghadee had been sent the leaflet to advertise the Bangor exhibition and public consultation, including churches, community organisations and the harbour, along with elected representatives from the area. With the nearest exhibition taking place approximately six miles away in Bangor and all of the information being available online in the virtual consultation room, the team felt that the consultation was appropriate to cover stakeholders in Donaghadee. However the team welcome this feedback and will include Donaghadee as a location in future rounds of public engagement events about NCW 2. We are happy to meet with any organisations in Donaghadee who have an interest in the project.

In response to the suggestion about holding an exhibition in the Ards peninsula, we recognise that the fishing fleet is an important consultee, and as such we have already embarked on a series of engagement meetings specifically for the fishing community, in Portavogie, Kilkeel, Ardglass, Larne, Bangor and Glasgow. The feedback we received at those meetings helped to inform our scoping report. This round of public exhibitions was for the general public as a whole and was open to everyone to attend. We continue to keep in touch with the fishing community through our Fisheries Liaison Officer SeaSource Offshore, and will be holding further fishing engagement meetings on the Ards peninsula in the future as the projects develop.

We thank the respondent for their feedback regarding engagement with sea angling bodies. As part of its early engagement North Channel Wind met with numerous different stakeholders between 2021 and 2023 to introduce the project and gain initial feedback. A list of these meetings is contained in section 2.3.4 of the Consultation Report. As set out in section 2.3.3, over 600 information leaflets about the public consultation and exhibitions were distributed to stakeholders including community, environment and sport clubs, fishing and marine stakeholders, churches, government bodies and elected representatives. This included the NI Federation of Sea Anglers. We have contacted the organisation who submitted this comment to apologise for inadvertently missing them in the consultation to date, offer a meeting and agree more time to allow them to review and respond to the Offshore Scoping Report. We also explained that this consultation was developer-led and the formal DAERA-led scoping consultation was yet to take place.

In response to the comment about a balanced approach, the Offshore Scoping Report was prepared by the consultancy firm RPS who are EIA specialists. The report was prepared in order to support a request for formal Scoping Opinions in relation to the proposed NCW 1 and NCW 2 Projects from

DAERA Marine Strategy & Licensing Branch. The purpose of the report is to provide stakeholders with information on the proposed projects and allow for engagement with stakeholders on the key topics to be addressed in the Offshore Environmental Statement for each project, as well as the baseline data sources and assessment methodologies to be used to inform it. Within the Offshore Scoping Report, a number of potential environmental impacts are considered. These include impacts which are proposed to be scoped into EIA due to likely significant effects in EIA terms and identified effect-receptor pathways, and also impacts proposed to be scoped out of EIA due to no likely significant effects in EIA terms or no effect-receptor pathways identified. North Channel Wind welcomes the opportunity for engagement with stakeholders and feedback on the Proposed Development and the scope (proposed content) of the Environmental Statement (ES) for each project.

North Channel Wind have an open-door policy and are happy to engage with any stakeholders at any point during the development of the projects. We are committed to sharing the feedback received from the consultation with stakeholders, and future consultations/exhibitions are planned during the EIA stage.

3.3. Working with other stakeholders

In addition to feedback received from members of the public during the public consultation, North Channel Wind are also engaging with a range of other important stakeholders, such as environmental NGOs, fishing representative organisations and other maritime users, on an ongoing basis. A table of all the meetings held to date is contained in section 2.3.4 of this report. Our ethos is to engage positively and work together with our stakeholders to address any issues raised and ensure all feedback received is carefully considered as the development phase progresses.

4. Next Steps

This report describes the Offshore Scoping stage public consultation for the NCW 1 and NCW 2 projects including:

- A description of the consultation and exhibition materials
- Details of how the consultation and exhibitions were publicised
- A summary of the feedback received and the project team response to the points raised.

Each submission received has been reviewed by the project team and answers provided, where possible. Where information is not yet available, this has been acknowledged. The feedback received from this public consultation, together with the formal scoping opinion which will be issued by DAERA, will be used to inform further project design and the environmental impact assessment.

Throughout the EIA process the team will continue to engage with stakeholders, including local communities, fishermen and other marine users, government, elected representatives, environmental groups and supply chain companies. We have an open-door policy and are available to talk with anyone who has an interest, or questions about the projects. As well as other engagement events, we aim to hold a further public consultation during the EIA process, during which the latest plans will be shared and there will be further opportunity for members of the public to provide feedback.

Other key activities for the project team over the next two years will include: assessment of onshore locations for grid connection, identification of export cable routes between the turbines and the shore, designing the layout of the wind farms, onshore and offshore environmental and technical surveys, progressing with the EIA. We aim to submit applications for consent for the projects in 2026.

We thank all of the participants in the public consultation and if you would like to keep in touch, members of the public are able to sign-up to receive news updates via a contact page on the website: www.northchannelwind.com/contact.

For any other queries please Fiona Stevens, North Channel Wind Stakeholder Manager, fiona.stevens@northchannelwind.com 07380 426 114.

Glossary

ANIFPO	Anglo North Irish Fish Producers Organisation
AFBI	Agrifood and Biosciences Institute
Capacity factor	The ratio of actual electrical energy output over a given period of time to the theoretical maximum electrical energy output over that period.
CFD	Contracts for Difference
DAERA	Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for the Economy
DfI	Department for Infrastructure
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
FLO	Fisheries Liaison Officer
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
MCA	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
MGN	Marine Guidance Note
NCW 1	North Channel Wind 1
NCW 2	North Channel Wind 2
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIE	Northern Ireland Electricity
NIFPO	Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation
NRA	Navigation Risk Assessment
PDE	Project Design Envelope
SONI	System Operator for Northern Ireland
SLVRA	Seascape, Landscape & Visual Resources Assessment
UREGNI	Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland
UXO	Unexploded Ordinance
TCE	The Crown Estate

Appendices

Appendix A	Exhibition Information Banners
Appendix B	Feedback Form
Appendix C	Supply Chain Form
Appendix D	Images from Virtual Consultation Room / Online Exhibition
Appendix E	Leaflet
Appendix F	Newspaper Advert
Appendix G	Copies of Press Releases

Appendix A

Exhibition Information Banners



WELCOME TO THE NORTH CHANNEL WIND PUBLIC EXHIBITION



Welcome to our exhibition and thank you for joining us to find out more about North Channel Wind, a flagship renewable energy development for Northern Ireland.

Using the latest floating wind turbine technology, we are proposing to build and operate two offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea - North Channel Wind 1 & 2.

This exhibition is the first of a number of consultation events designed to keep you informed and encourage feedback, as we move forward with the development of North Channel Wind.

THIS EXHIBITION INCLUDES INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- ✓ Project location and development approach
- ✓ Northern Ireland's aspiration to develop offshore wind
- ✓ Current project status and development timeline
- ✓ Generating electricity from offshore wind
- ✓ Description of the project
- ✓ Environmental Impact Assessment
- ✓ Visualisations of what the wind farms could look like
- ✓ Fishing engagement
- ✓ Community and supply chain
- ✓ How to get in touch

YOUR FEEDBACK

Your feedback plays a significant role in the ongoing development of the project. Please take your time viewing the information and get in touch if you have any questions or comments in one of the following ways:

- ✓ Fill in a feedback form at the end of this exhibition or via northchannelwind.com
- ✓ Request a call-back by phoning **+44 (0)28 9051 1382**
- ✓ Email our stakeholder manager Fiona Stevens: fiona.stevens@northchannelwind.com

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

North Channel Wind is a wholly owned subsidiary of SBM Offshore and the front end development work is being carried out by NMK Renewables Limited. SBM Offshore is a global market leader in floating offshore solutions for the energy industry. A deep-water specialist with over 60 years of experience and innovation, SBM brings engineering and technical expertise to the projects.

The NMK Renewables team has decades of experience in the renewable energy sector and are passionate about delivering offshore wind projects that can enhance coastal communities and enable Northern Ireland to achieve its energy and climate targets.

SBM OFFSHORE



SBM Offshore is a worldwide provider of floating solutions to the offshore energy industry.

Our experience in the oil and gas industry allows innovation in renewables, bringing strong engineering and technical capabilities to the North Channel Wind projects.

SBM Offshore's strategy is founded on the three components of environmental, social and governance:

- ✓ Environmental: focusing on energy transition towards net-zero
- ✓ Social: creating a safe and inclusive environment where people inspire and empower each other
- ✓ Governance: carrying out values-based actions to achieve high ethical standards

TRANSITION TO NET ZERO

At SBM Offshore we use our oil and gas know-how and tried and tested marine capability to develop and deliver new forms of renewable energy technology, including floating wind turbines, wave energy converters and energy storage, aiming to be net-zero by 2050.

Provence Grand Large

Construction is underway at Provence Grande Large, France's first floating offshore wind farm. SBM is delivering the design and EPCI (engineering, procurement, construction, installation) of the floating platform and mooring system, based on our tension leg platform design. Jointly owned by EDF Renewables and Maple Power, Provence Grande Large will account for approximately 10% of the globally installed floating wind electricity generation capacity in 2023



Health, Safety & Security

We are committed to safeguarding the health, safety and security of our employees, subcontractors and assets, as well as minimising the impact of our activities on local ecosystems and proactively protecting the environment. SBM Offshore's Total Recordable Injury Frequency Rate has remained below the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers' (IOGP) average since 2018.



Deepwater experience

We have successfully delivered 15 deep water projects in depths between 500 and 2000+ metres.

Global presence

Our 7000 staff operate from 15 locations globally, covering 72 nationalities.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

North Channel Wind 1 and 2 are proposed floating offshore wind farms in the North Channel of the Irish Sea. North Channel Wind 1 (NCW 1) is off the east coast of County Antrim, with turbines positioned between 9 km and 25 km from the shore (nearest to farthest).

North Channel Wind 2 (NCW 2) is located off the south-eastern coast of County Antrim and north east coast of County Down, with turbines between 15 and 24 km from shore (nearest to farthest).

WHY THE NORTH CHANNEL?

Many factors are taken into consideration when identifying areas suitable for potential floating offshore wind farms. North Channel Wind has undertaken comprehensive work to determine the optimum area for the development of financeable floating offshore wind projects. These include:

- ✓ The availability of good wind resource
- ✓ Potential to connect to the electricity grid
- ✓ The constraints in Northern Ireland territorial waters
- ✓ Absence of hard constraints, such as areas already leased by the State for other uses
- ✓ International shipping routes
- ✓ Water depth or seabed conditions
- ✓ Environmental, technical and economic considerations

The combination of all the above factors are the main reasons why we have identified the North Channel as an excellent location for a floating offshore wind development.

OUR DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

Our approach to the development of North Channel Wind is based on a number of fundamental principles, including:

- ✓ **Stakeholder Engagement**
We are committed to sharing our proposals for the project widely and openly. We welcome feedback from all project stakeholders including the local community.
- ✓ **Delivering a Buildable Project**
North Channel Wind will be one of the first floating offshore wind farms in Northern Ireland and the technology is evolving all the time. We are taking a “technology neutral” or “design envelope” approach by describing a range of different designs and configurations that may be deployed. These are described in our Scoping Report.
- ✓ **Whole Project**
In line with international best practice, and as far as possible, we will design a project that considers all the elements of the wind farm development, both onshore and offshore. This also includes considering all project phases from the current development stage, through construction and operation, to decommissioning.



NCW 1

NCW 2



North Channel Wind

NORTHERN IRELAND'S ASPIRATION FOR OFFSHORE WIND

In 2022 the Northern Ireland Assembly set a target that by 2030, at least 80% of electricity consumed in Northern Ireland should come from renewable energy sources. To help reach this goal, the Northern Ireland Government announced the ambition to achieve 1 gigawatt of offshore wind energy.

Benefits of North Channel Wind

Northern Ireland has excellent wind speeds. The North Channel Wind projects offer an opportunity to help our environment and deliver benefits to our economy and communities.



Security Of Supply

Generating our electricity locally from offshore wind will reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuel-based energy and significantly improve energy security.



Investment

NCW would be Northern Ireland's largest generator, bringing substantial investment to the local economy, supporting the development of a local supply chain and job creation.



Community

NCW is committed to citizen engagement and will work closely with local communities throughout the development to maximise the benefit to the local area. There are various mechanisms and schemes to support communities in different jurisdictions. NCW plans to investigate best practice internationally, and through meaningful dialogue with communities and stakeholders develop a bespoke process which will support local communities and other marine stakeholders.



Renewable Electricity

We estimate that NCW 1 has the potential to generate electricity equivalent to around 58% of NI's total electricity consumption, based on 2022 figures. NCW 2 has the potential to generate around 24% of consumption.



Climate Change

We estimate NCW 1 could potentially save over 1.8 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year compared to the equivalent generation by non-renewables. NCW 2 could potentially save over 794,000 tonnes every year.



Biodiversity

Development of an equitable marine 'net gain' system, enabling both strategic and site-based programmes to enhance marine biodiversity.

Potential electricity equivalent has been estimated by dividing the estimated annual generation (for NCW 1 based on 1000 MW installed capacity or for NCW 2 based on 420 MW installed capacity) by the Dept. for the Economy's figure for total electricity consumption in Jan-Dec 2022 (Issue-26-Electricity-Consumption-and-Renewable-Generation-in-Northern-Ireland-January-2022-to-December-2022)), multiplied by 100.

Potential carbon reduction has been estimated by multiplying the estimated annual generation (for NCW 1 based on 1000 MW installed capacity or for NCW 2 based on 420 MW installed capacity) by the number of tonnes of carbon which fossil fuels would have produced to generate the same amount of electricity, based on the Dept. for Energy Security and Net Zero's "all non-renewable fuels" emissions statistic of 432 tonnes of carbon dioxide per GWh of electricity supplied in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (July 2022) Table 5.14 ("Estimated carbon dioxide emissions from electricity supplied")



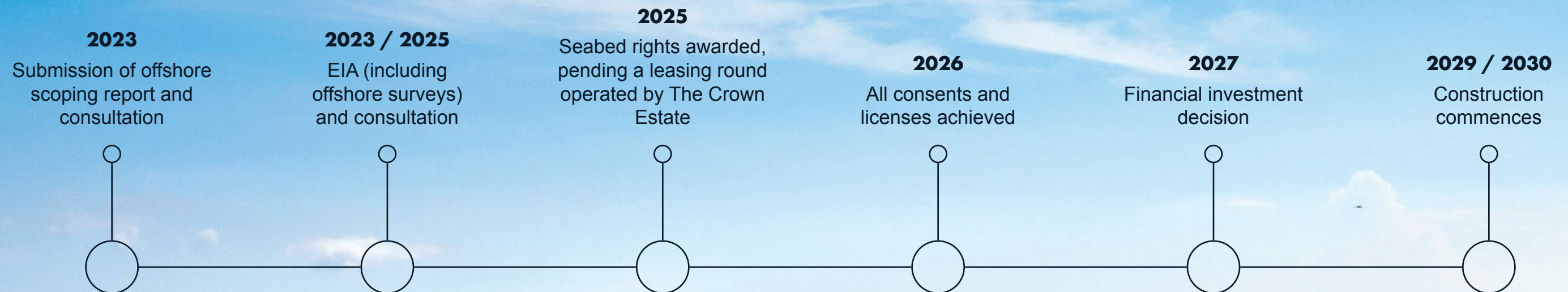
CURRENT PROJECT STATUS



We are currently at the scoping stage of development, which gives us the opportunity to engage with stakeholders to identify all the factors to be considered in the assessment of the project and help inform development of the most suitable proposals.

IN PROGRESS

- ✓ Scoping consultation
- ✓ Aerial Bird and mammal surveys (24 month survey period started September 2022)
- ✓ Engagement with fishing industry
- ✓ Offshore and onshore survey scheduling
- ✓ Engineering and grid studies
- ✓ Preliminary turbine array design



The results of the scoping consultation will inform the next phase of assessment, which is preparing a marine licence application. This will be supported by an Environmental Statement, a Habitats Regulations Assessment and a Navigational Risk Assessment.

Rights to lease the seabed are granted by The Crown Estate. We intend to submit an application once a leasing round for Northern Ireland waters is open.

GENERATING ELECTRICITY FROM OFFSHORE WIND



HOW WILL NORTH CHANNEL WIND PRODUCE ELECTRICITY?

Wind turbines generate electricity by capturing the natural power of the winds.

The force of the wind rotates the turbine blades which spins a generator where mechanical energy is converted into electricity. The electricity generated is transmitted through cables inside the tower, extending down to the seabed where they are buried or otherwise protected. Groups of turbines are interconnected by submarine cables, which then connect to an offshore substation where a transformer boosts the electricity to a higher voltage, allowing for more efficient power transmission to the shore.

The offshore cables are connected to the onshore cables at what is called a Transition Joint Bay (TJB). Underground onshore cables will carry the power from the TJB to an onshore substation where the electricity is regulated and harmonised to meet the specifications required for connection into the national electricity transmission system. A short connection then links the substation to the existing electricity network.

EVOLUTION OF THE OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

Since the first large-scale offshore wind farm was installed, the industry has matured rapidly, with innovation in design and increased focus on reliability and maintainability.

Floating offshore wind is also accelerating rapidly. There are several large-scale demonstration projects being deployed across Europe and forecasts from Wind Europe and the Carbon Trust anticipate between 7 and 13 gigawatts respectively being deployed globally by 2030.

The Crown Estate has been successful in working closely with industry and a wide range of stakeholders in promoting innovation with plans to unlock 4 gigawatts of floating wind in the Celtic Sea, off the south western coasts of Wales and England. The recent ScotWind seabed auction rounds in Scotland saw 60% of successful projects utilising floating technology, which has given a huge vote of confidence for this technology to deliver our future energy requirements.



North Channel Wind

OFFSHORE DEVELOPMENT

Offshore wind farms require infrastructure both offshore and onshore.

The key offshore components will include:

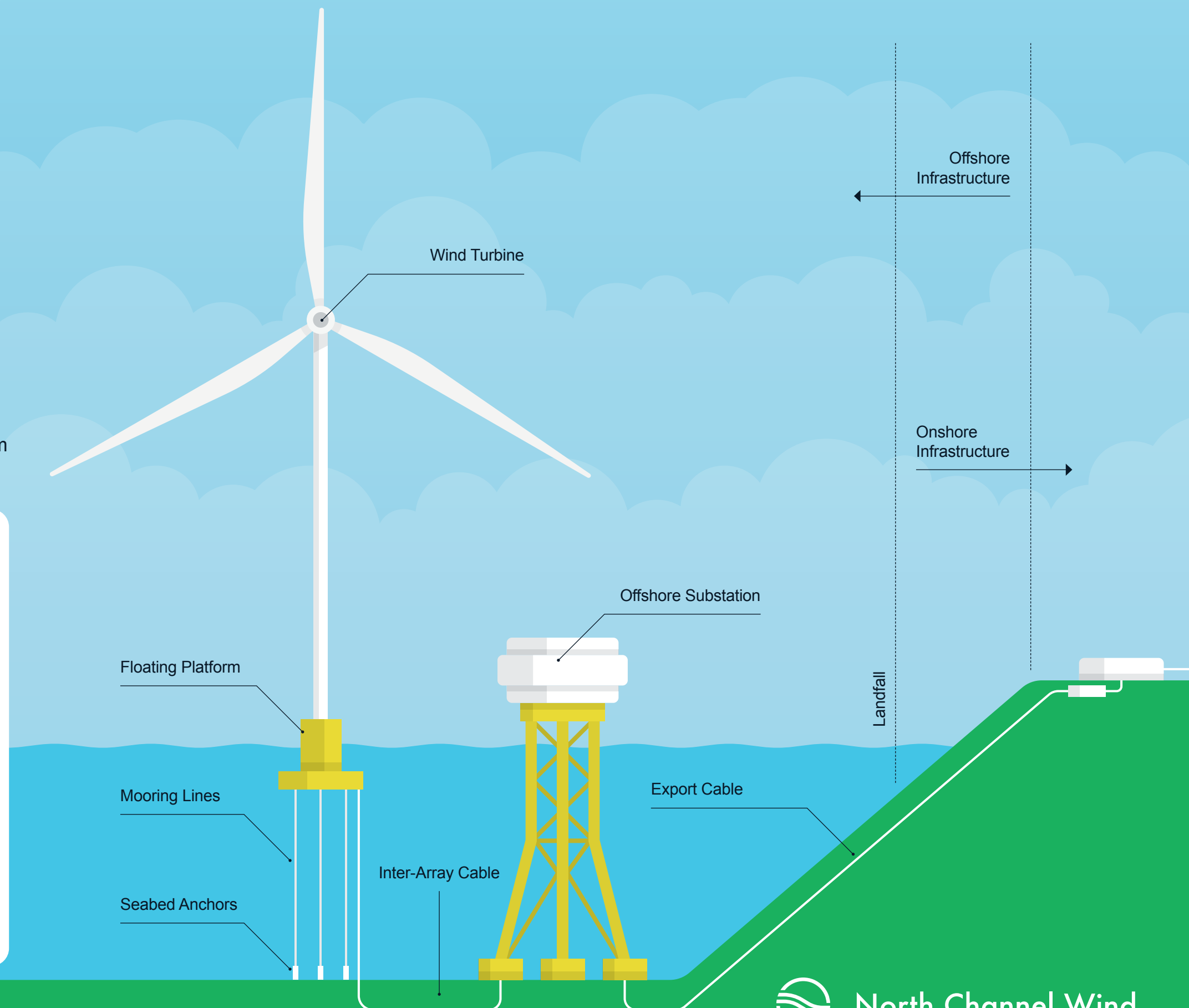
- ✓ Wind turbines
- ✓ Floating platforms (on which the turbines sit)
- ✓ Mooring infrastructure (to anchor the platforms to the seabed)
- ✓ Offshore substation(s)
- ✓ Inter-array cables (connecting the wind turbines together and to the offshore substation)
- ✓ Offshore export cables (to export the electricity from the wind farm to landfall)

Turbine size will be dependent on a number of factors including site conditions, logistics and turbine availability in the market.

We anticipate the turbines will have a capacity of between 15 megawatts and 22 megawatts each, with rotor diameters between 240 m and 290 m respectively and a maximum tip height of 325 m above sea level. Depending on the final size of the turbine, we estimate NCW 1 could consist of between 46 and 68 turbines and NCW 2 could consist of between 19 and 28 turbines.

We estimate a maximum total installed capacity of around 1000 megawatts for NCW 1 and 420 megawatts for NCW 2.

Once constructed, we anticipate the wind farms will operate for around 35 years.



ONSHORE DEVELOPMENT



THE KEY ONSHORE INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WILL INCLUDE:

- ✓ Electrical grid infrastructure to connect the wind farm to the electricity network onshore
- ✓ Operations and maintenance infrastructure to support the wind farm

ELECTRICAL GRID INFRASTRUCTURE

The electrical grid infrastructure includes one or more landfall sites where the offshore cables come ashore, with associated transition joint bays to connect the offshore and onshore cables; underground onshore export cables and onshore substation(s).

All construction areas related to the works required at the landfall and along the cable route will, where feasible, be restored to their original condition following the completion of the works.

The point of connection of the project to the Northern Ireland electricity network will be determined by the transmission system operator (SONI).

The following 275kV substations are the most likely points of connection:

- ✓ Ballylumford 275kV substation located close to the coast, adjacent to Ballylumford natural gas fired power station at the tip of the Islandmagee peninsula.
- ✓ Kilroot 275kV substation located at the coast near Carrickfergus, adjacent to the Kilroot Coal (and oil) fired power station.

The substations(s) may require additional infrastructure to facilitate the transmission of electricity from new renewable energy generation capacity, as determined by SONI studies and requirements.



CURRENT POSITION

Work continues to establish the most suitable location for the electrical grid infrastructure. North Channel Wind is currently assessing multiple options in terms of engineering, environmental and land use planning characteristics. Our aim is to confirm the final onshore locations and provide additional information during future consultation phases during the environmental impact assessment phase.

ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS - OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Onshore operations and maintenance (O&M) facilities will support the offshore wind farm. An O&M building will have office space for wind farm employees responsible for maintaining the safe and reliable operation of the wind farm. The O&M infrastructure will also include storage areas, electrical components and laydown areas and associated general works as necessary for the construction, operation and final decommissioning of the North Channel Wind projects, including all ancillary development.



North Channel Wind

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT 1/2



EIA Process

A comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is undertaken to assess the impacts of the project on a range of receptors. The results from these assessments are reported in an Environmental Statement, which forms the main supportive information that is submitted with consent applications.

The assessment methodologies used are informed by consultations and a range of guidance documents and best practice principles from recognised sources.

Details of the proposed environmental approach offshore, and the works we will undertake as part of the assessment process, are contained in our Offshore Scoping Report. These include:

- ✓ Physical environment: (Marine Processes and Subsea Noise)
- ✓ Biological Environment: (Benthic and Intertidal Ecology, Fish and Shellfish Ecology, Marine Mammals and Sea Turtles, Birds)
- ✓ Human environment: (Commercial Fisheries, Shipping and Navigation, Aviation, Military and Communications, Marine Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Seascape, Landscape and Visual, Infrastructure and Other Users of the Sea, Population and Human Health).

Details of the proposed environmental approach onshore will be described in the Onshore Scoping Report due to be released later this year.

Environmental Surveys and Studies

Environmental surveys and studies began in 2022 to understand the baseline environment in relation to the receptors that will be considered in the EIA. These receptors include birds, marine mammals, benthic (seabed) ecology, fish populations and marine archaeology. Onshore ecological surveys are due to commence later this year.

Further surveys are planned for the North Channel Wind turbine array areas, offshore export cable corridor areas of search and onshore export cable corridor area of search.



Northern Gannet

-
- The map shows the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland. A red shaded area indicates the NCW 1 Turbine Array Area of Search. A blue shaded area indicates the NCW 2 Turbine Array Area of Search. A red dashed line indicates the NCW 1 Export Cable Corridor Area of Search. A blue dashed line indicates the NCW 2 Export Cable Corridor Area of Search.
- NCW 1 Turbine Array Area of Search
 - NCW 2 Turbine Array Area of Search
 - NCW 1 Export Cable Corridor Area of Search
 - NCW 2 Export Cable Corridor Area of Search



North Channel Wind

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2/2



Further surveys are planned for the North Channel Wind turbine array areas, offshore export cable corridor areas of search and onshore export cable corridor area of search. These surveys are necessary to:

- ✓ Determine suitable cable landing points
- ✓ Inform the technical and electrical design and layout of the project, including the substation, methodologies for laying and burying cables and landfall site selection
- ✓ Better understand the ground conditions to inform foundation design and choice
- ✓ Collect information on waves and tides across the site through deployment of wave buoys and current measurement instrumentation
- ✓ Identify and manage risks and any technical, environmental and socioeconomic constraints across the site
- ✓ Collect environmental data that will be assessed and submitted in the Environmental Statement as part of the application for consent

Marine surveys

Geophysical surveys:

Conducted to explore the physical features of the seabed which includes water depth, definition of seabed structures (e.g. sand waves), identifying sediment type and distribution (sand, mud, gravel) both on and below the seabed, and potential archaeological features.

Metocean surveys:

Carried out to gain an understanding of the meteorological and oceanographic conditions that exist in the North Channel.

Ecology and ornithology:

Undertaken to consider the biological environment and will include:

- ✓ Fish and benthic/seabed habitat
- ✓ Marine mammals
- ✓ Birds

Onshore studies

Environmental assessments will be undertaken of the landfall site(s), transition joint bays, onshore underground cable, temporary construction areas, onshore project substation(s), and cables connecting the onshore project substation to the existing transmission grid substation(s)

Studies and surveys are required to further define the onshore aspects of the project, including the locations of the above infrastructure, and a scoping report detailing these elements is currently being developed. Consultation on this will be undertaken with the relevant bodies and it will be made available on our project website:

northchannelwind.com

The surveys to be undertaken will inform onshore impact assessments in the following areas:

- ✓ Ecology
- ✓ Archaeology and cultural heritage
- ✓ Hydrology and hydrogeology
- ✓ Geology and soils
- ✓ Landscape & visual
- ✓ Traffic and transport
- ✓ Noise and vibration
- ✓ Amenity and community aspects



FISHING ENGAGEMENT



North Channel Wind is committed to working with fishing and marine communities to ensure we understand their views, so that we can minimise and mitigate any potential impacts of the wind farm projects

Fishing Engagement Meetings

Initial engagement meetings have been held with commercial fishers operating from the ports and harbours around Antrim and Down coastlines, including Larne, Bangor, Portavogie, Ardglass and Kilkeel, and the Clyde Fisheries Association in Glasgow, as well as with representatives from the Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Association (NIFPO), the Anglo-North Irish Fish Producers Association (ANIFPO) and the Northern Ireland Scallop Association.

Impact Assessment

Feedback received at the engagement meetings to date has helped to inform the commercial fishing section of the scoping report, to ensure the potential impacts raised will be taken account of in the environmental impact assessment. We continue to welcome any further feedback from stakeholders in the fishing and marine communities on the factors you think should be considered in the environmental impact assessment. Have your say by filling in the feedback form.

Fisheries Liaison Officer

We will continue to ensure the local fishing industry is kept up-to-date and to gather feedback as we move forward with the project development.

SeaSource Offshore is the Fisheries Liaison Officer (FLO) for North Channel Wind. The FLO is the primary point of contact and works to maintain strong lines of communication between the fishing industry and North Channel Wind.

If you have any questions please contact Brian Chambers:



Brian Chambers

SeaSource Offshore

flo2@seasource.com
+44 (0)7355744942



North Channel Wind

COMMUNITY AND SUPPLY CHAIN BENEFITS

We are committed to developing the North Channel Wind projects in a sustainable way, that brings benefits to our environment, society and economy for years to come. An important part of this is working with local communities, businesses and other stakeholders.

As well as the wider benefits offered by the North Channel Wind projects in terms of reducing carbon emissions and improving the security of our energy supplies, communities & businesses will also benefit

COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

North Channel Wind is committed to citizen engagement and will work closely with local communities throughout the development to maximise the benefit to the local area.

There are various mechanisms and schemes to support communities in different jurisdictions. We plan to investigate best practice internationally, and through meaningful dialogue with communities and stakeholders develop a bespoke process which will support local communities and other marine stakeholders.

SUPPLY CHAIN OPPORTUNITIES

North Channel Wind represents one of the largest energy infrastructure investments in Northern Ireland this decade. The development, construction and operation of the wind farms will generate a large number of jobs and support economic development in the local economy. There will be significant opportunities for the supply chain, such as contractors, sub-contractors, vessel supply, facilities and service providers. If you would like your business to be considered for work on the projects please get in touch. You can register your interest on our website, www.northchannelwind.com or speak to a member of our team.



B2B
OFFSHORE

GIVING US YOUR FEEDBACK



North Channel Wind believes in meaningful engagement with all stakeholders at every stage of the projects' development and see consultation as an integral part of the development process. Listening to and addressing the views of interested parties helps to ensure a robust EIA and deliver a better project.

This Consultation

This current public consultation will run for four weeks, starting on Wednesday 31st May 2023 and continuing until Wednesday 28th June. It gives the opportunity for people to provide input to North Channel Wind at the scoping stage, which will then be taken into consideration in the subsequent environmental impact assessment.

We would particularly like to hear your views on:

- ✓ What topics should be scoped into our environmental impact assessment?
- ✓ What information would you like to see about the North Channel Wind project in future consultations/communications and how can we improve our public exhibitions?
- ✓ Any other thoughts you have on the project

Once this public consultation has closed a report will be prepared summarising the feedback received, providing responses to issues raised and outlining next steps. This will be shared with stakeholders.

Next Steps & Ongoing Engagement

The formal scoping consultation, led by the Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs (DAERA), will progress over the coming months, and will conclude with DAERA issuing a formal scoping opinion. This will be used to inform further project design and the full environmental impact assessment phase will begin. We aim to hold a further public consultation during the impact assessment process, during which we will share our latest plans and there will be further opportunity for you to give us your feedback.

Listening to and engaging with the public and all our stakeholders is an important part of the development of our project at all stages, not just during public consultation.

The North Channel Wind team will remain available to talk with anyone who has questions and wishes to learn more about the project and will continue to engage in the months and years ahead.

All the latest project news will be on our dedicated website. To sign up for project updates, speak to the team or arrange a meeting, please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Get in Touch



Fiona Stevens
Stakeholder Manager
fiona.stevens@northchannelwind.com



Melanie O'Driscoll
Project Coordinator
melanie.odriscoll@northchannelwind.com

Request a call-back by phoning:
+44 (0)28 9051 1382

Visit our website:
northchannelwind.com

Please let us know your views by filling in our feedback form: [LINK](#)

Appendix B

Feedback Form

Offshore Scoping Consultation Feedback Form

Please take the time to let us know your views by filling in our feedback form. Your feedback will then be taken into consideration by North Channel Wind as the project develops.

Please note that comments submitted to North Channel Wind are not representations to the determining authority (DAERA). There will be an opportunity for members of the public to submit representations to DAERA should we apply for a marine licence in the future.

1. Are you supportive or not supportive of Northern Ireland's target of generating 80% of its electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030?
 - ☐ Very supportive
 - ☐ Somewhat supportive
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Not very supportive
 - ☐ Not at all supportive

2. Are you supportive or not supportive of the role of offshore wind in helping to meet our 2030 renewable energy targets?
 - ☐ Very supportive
 - ☐ Somewhat supportive
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Not very supportive
 - ☐ Not at all supportive

3. In general, what are your views on the North Channel Wind projects?
 - ☐ I am generally in favour, but would like further information as the projects develop
 - ☐ Currently, I am neither in favour nor opposed
 - ☐ I am not supportive
 - ☐ Other (please specify):

4. What do you think are the most important factors that you would like us to consider as we progress the design of the North Channel Wind projects? (Please rank 1-8 with 1 being most important).

- _____ Benefits for local communities
- _____ Environmental management
- _____ Visual impacts
- _____ Delivering the lowest cost electricity to consumers
- _____ Maximising the generation of renewable electricity
- _____ Development of local supply chain
- _____ Impacts on marine users
- _____ Other (please specify):

5. Do you have any questions about the North Channel Wind development consent application process?

6. Do you have any comments on the North Channel Wind Scoping Report? Are there any other factors you think need to be included?

7. Please provide any specific feedback on North Channel Wind 1 that you would like the team to consider.

8. Please provide any specific feedback on North Channel Wind 2 that you would like the team to consider.



9. How helpful has this exhibition been in giving you an understanding of the North Channel Wind projects?

- ☐ Very helpful
- ☐ Somewhat helpful
- ☐ Not very helpful
- ☐ Not at all helpful

10. Have you any suggestions for how our exhibitions could be improved?

11. Would you like us to keep in touch as the North Channel Wind project progresses?
Please tick

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. How would you like to receive project updates? Please tick

- ☐ By Email OR ☐ By Post

Please enter your email address in the box below

Please enter your postal address in the box below

Privacy

Do you consent to participating in this feedback form?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you consent to North Channel Wind contacting you again?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Signed: _____ Date: _____

By consenting to participate in this feedback form you agree to North Channel Wind processing your personal data for the purpose of gathering valued feedback and to keep you informed of our project. We take the protection of your data seriously. We want you to feel confident that we are keeping your data secure, and that we handle and process it in accordance with the Data Protection Acts 1998 and 2003 as amended and the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018. You always have the option of Opting Out of mailing lists. To opt out please email melanie.odriscoll@northchannelwind.com For more information on your privacy rights please go to <https://northchannelwind.com/privacy-policy> or contact our privacy office at PrivacyOffice@sbmoffshore.com

Thank you for filling in our feedback form

Appendix C

Supply Chain Form

Become a Supplier

Please complete our online form and we will add you to our supply chain database

Company Name	Telephone Number
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Company website	Email
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Address 1	Address 2
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Town	County
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Country	Post code
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Contact name	Contact number
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please describe your business size in terms of employees

☐ 1-10

☐ 11-50

☐ 51-100

☐ 101-500

☐ 501-1000

☐ 1001-10000

☐ 10000+

What phases of our project is your business experienced in?

☐ Design

☐ Consenting

☐ EPC - Engineering, Procurement, Construction

☐ Installation & Commissioning

☐ Operations & Maintenance

☐ Decommissioning

☐ Professional Services

What capabilities best describe your business?

- ☐ Offshore Surveys
- ☐ ID PPE / Health & Safety / Equipment
- ☐ Onshore Surveys
- ☐ Coating / Protection / Cleaning
- ☐ Steel Works
- ☐ Planning / Consenting Preparation
- ☐ Composites
- ☐ Stakeholder Engagement
- ☐ Seals and Parts
- ☐ Client Representative
- ☐ Control Systems
- ☐ Engineering & Design Studies
- ☐ Anchors & Chain
- ☐ Hulls
- ☐ Hydraulics
- ☐ Technical Due Diligence
- ☐ Slings & Working at Height
- ☐ Manufacture, Fabrication & Supply
- ☐ After Warranty Period
- ☐ Diving Services / ROV's / AUV's
- ☐ Emergency Response / Crisis Management
- ☐ Mooring Installation
- ☐ Plant, Tools & Equipment Provision & Servicing
- ☐ Moorings
- ☐ Marine Operations
- ☐ Cables
- ☐ Subsea
- ☐ Onshore Civil & Structures
- ☐ Turbine / Substation Installation
- ☐ Wind Turbine Generators
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Owner's Engineering
- ☐ Operation Support
- ☐ Project Management
- ☐ Port & Support Services
- ☐ Electrical
- ☐ Ancillary Services / Broker Services
- ☐ Certification
- ☐ Personnel Services
- ☐ Logistics / Warehousing
- ☐ Certification
- ☐ Lifting / Cranes

☐ Structural Services / Components

☐ Vessel Construction & Maintenance

☐ Slings & Working at Height

☐ Engineering Services/ Components

☐ Vessel Brokers & Suppliers

☐ Electrical Services / Components

☐ Technical, Equipment & Personnel Transfer

☐ Assembly Facilities

☐ Offshore Storage & Accommodation

☐ Media

☐ IT / Specialist Software

☐ Certification

☐ Lighting / Navigation

☐ Training / Education

☐ Assembly Support

☐ Professional Body / Member Group / Cluster

☐ Cable Protection/ Scour Protection

☐ Onshore Accommodation & Services

☐ PPE / Health & Safety / Equipment

What capabilities best describe your business?

Do you consent to North Channel Wind storing the information you have provided to keep you informed of this project and other related projects for North Channel Wind?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you consent to North Channel Wind sharing the information above with its parent companies?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Submit

Appendix D

Images from Virtual Consultation Room / Online Exhibition

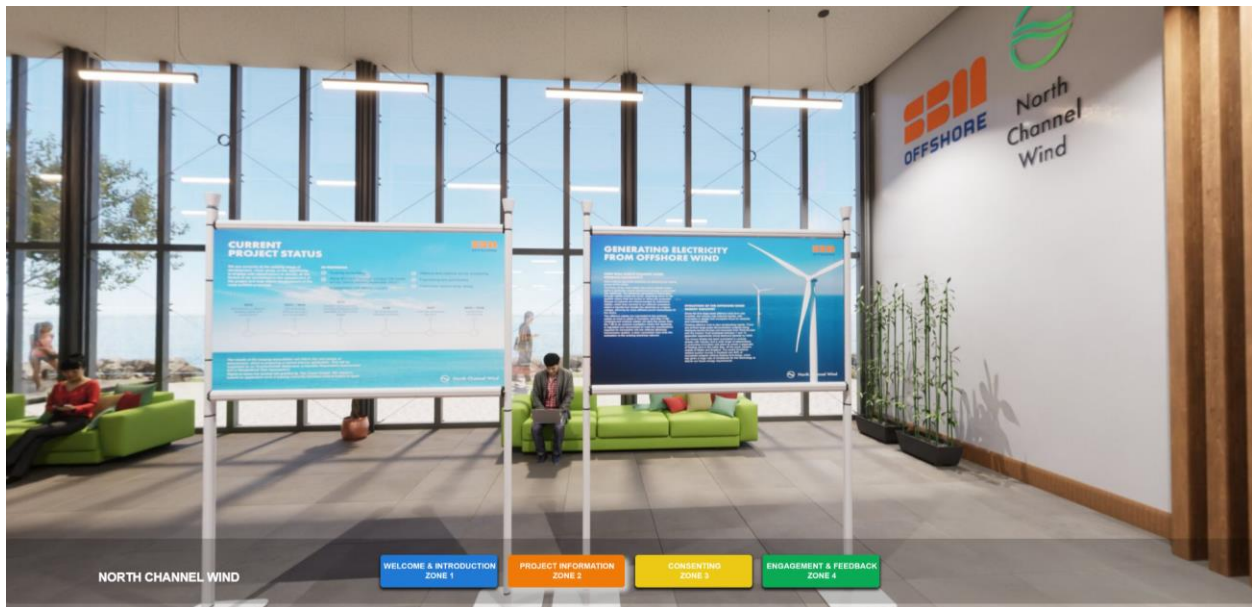


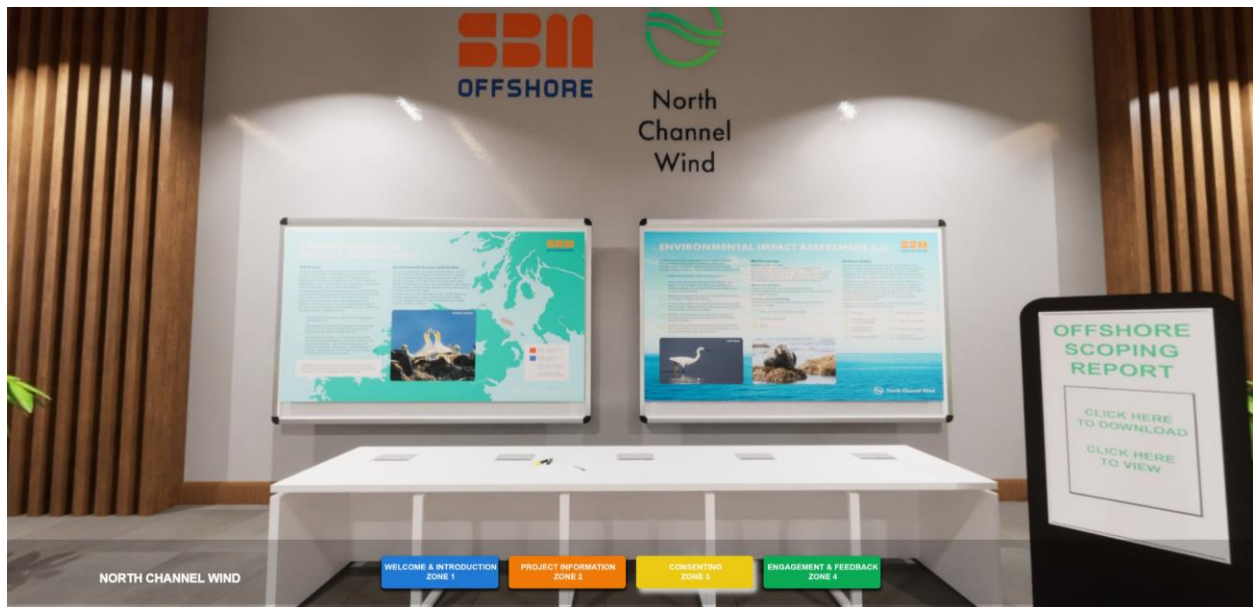
Appendix D – Images from Virtual Consultation Room / Online Exhibition

Users are able to navigate around the room. Information is grouped into 4 colour-coded zones to ease navigation (Welcome & Introduction; Project Information; Consenting; and Engagement & Feedback).

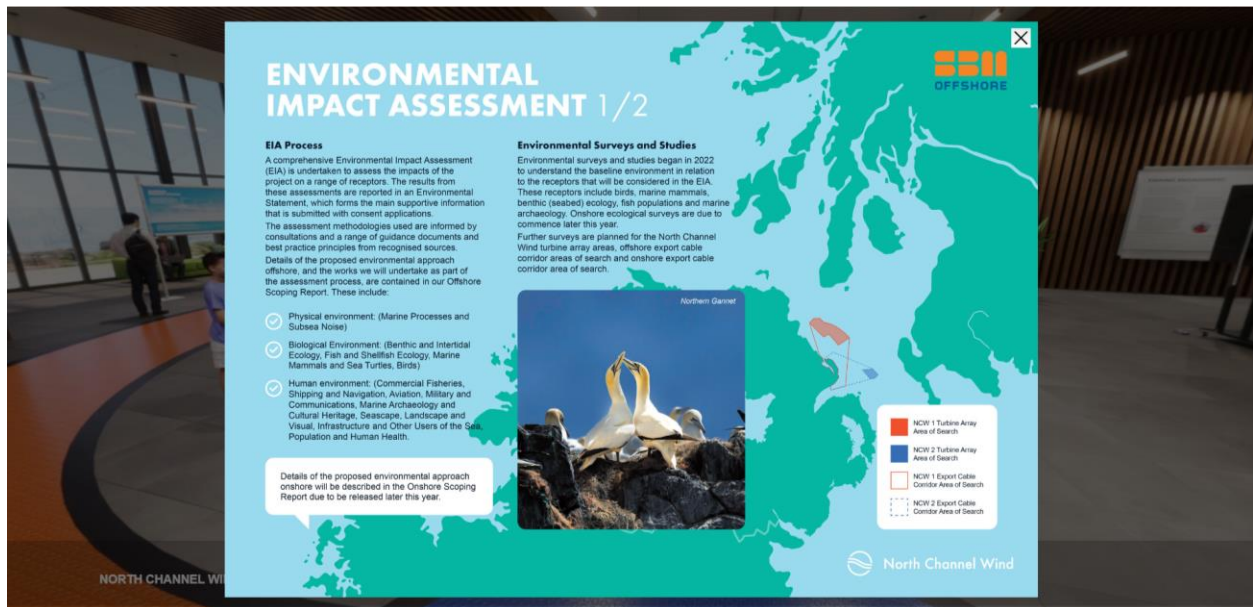


Information is displayed on boards by topic area.

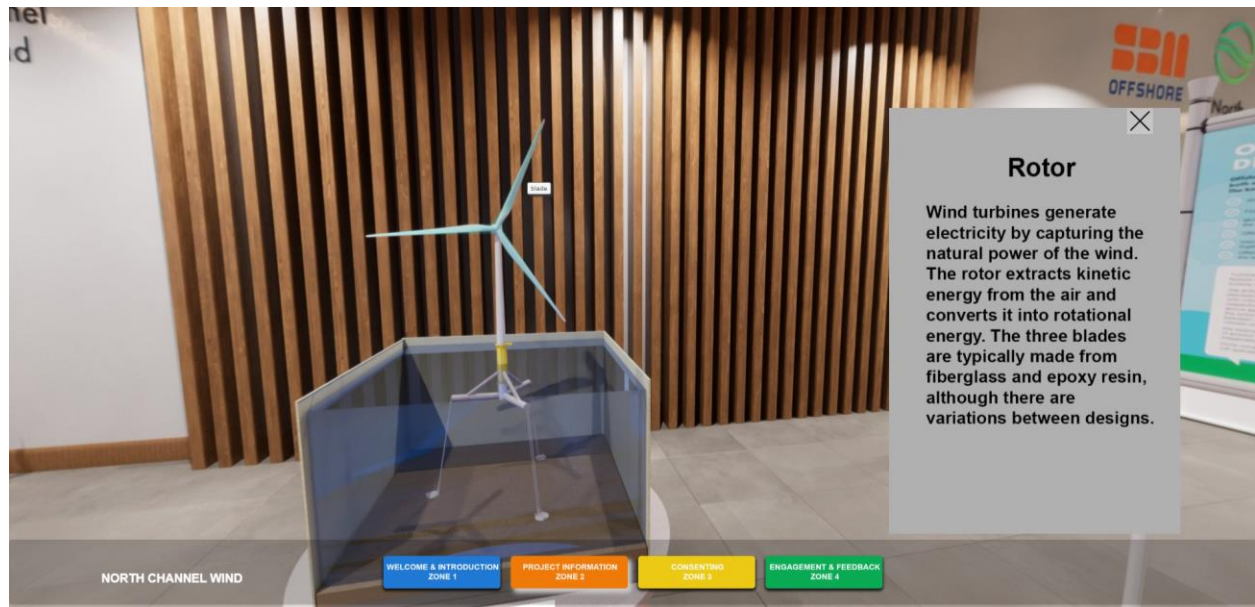




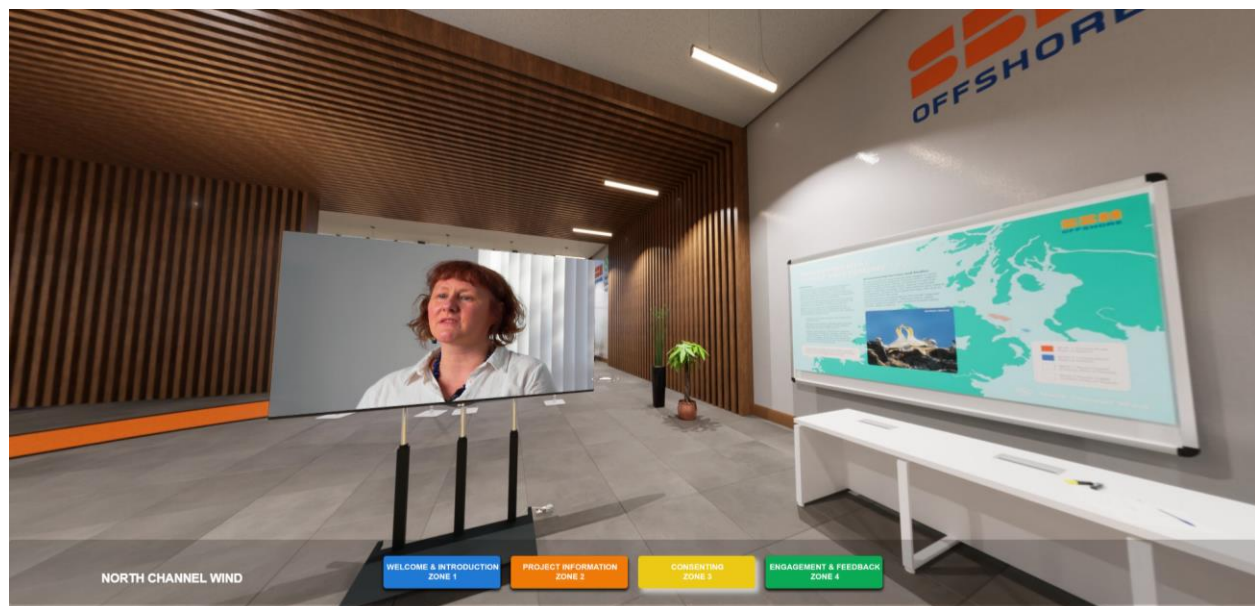
These open to full-screen size when clicked on.



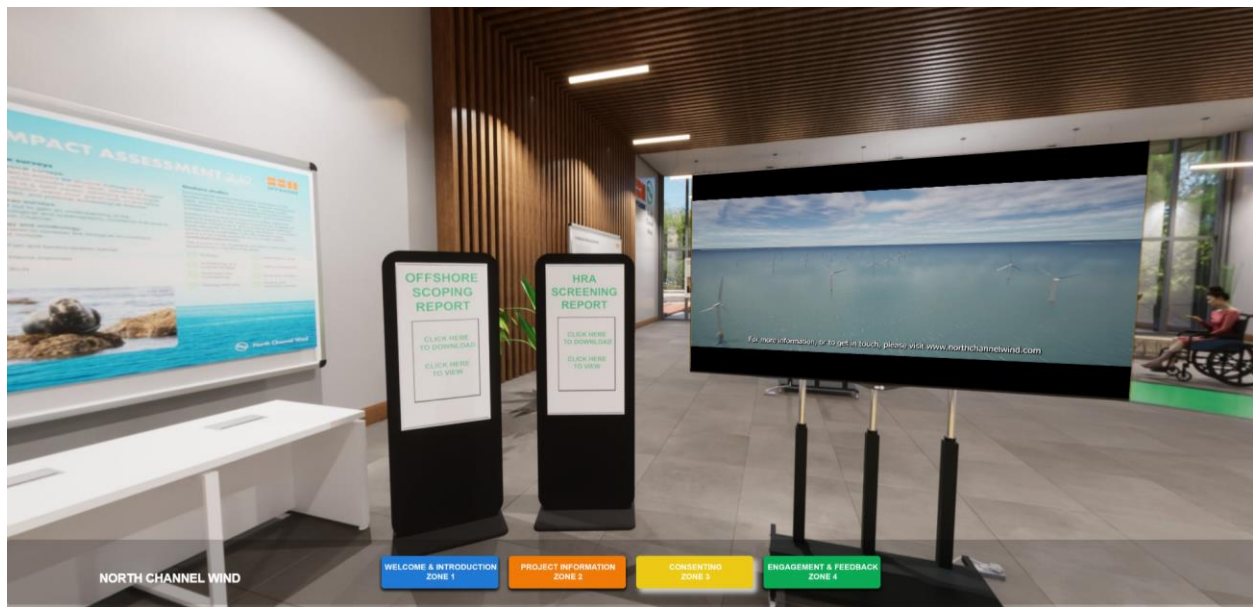
Users can click on an interactive turbine model to reveal information about each component.



The exhibition includes a number of videos of North Channel Wind team members speaking about different aspects of the project.

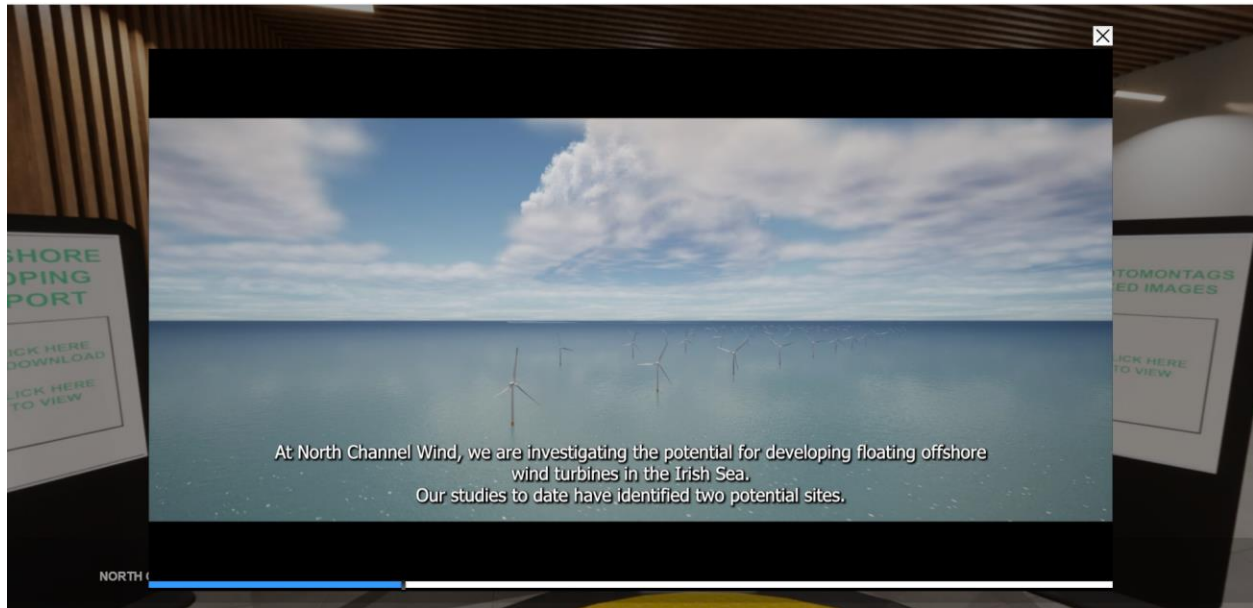


Users can click to open the Offshore Scoping Report and the HRA Screening Report in new windows.

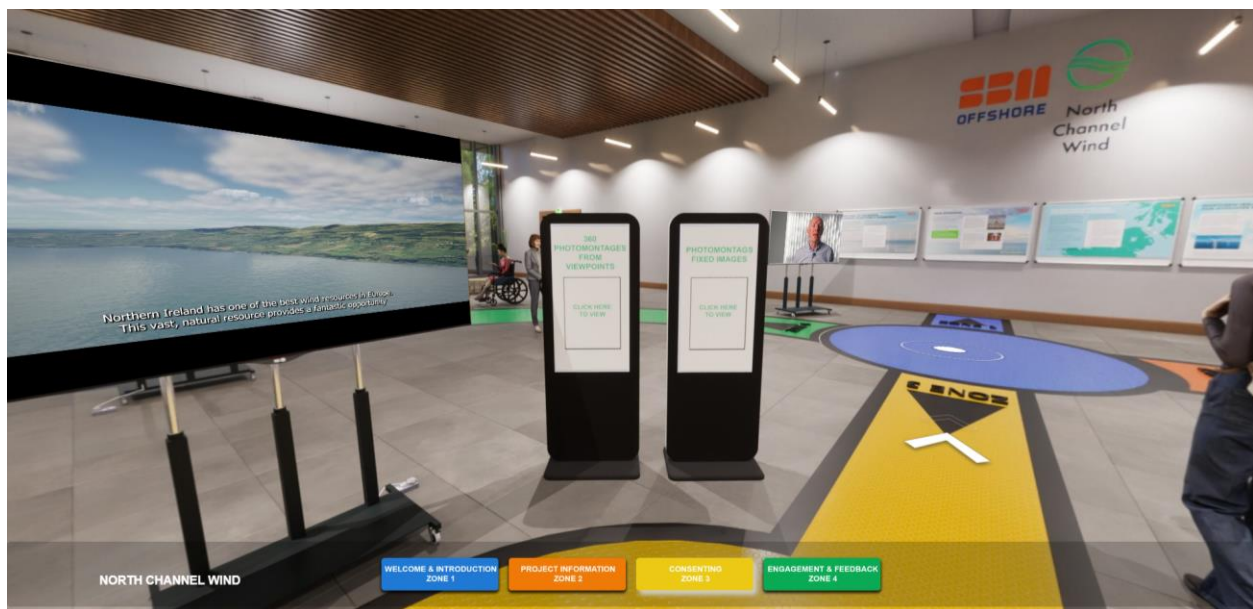


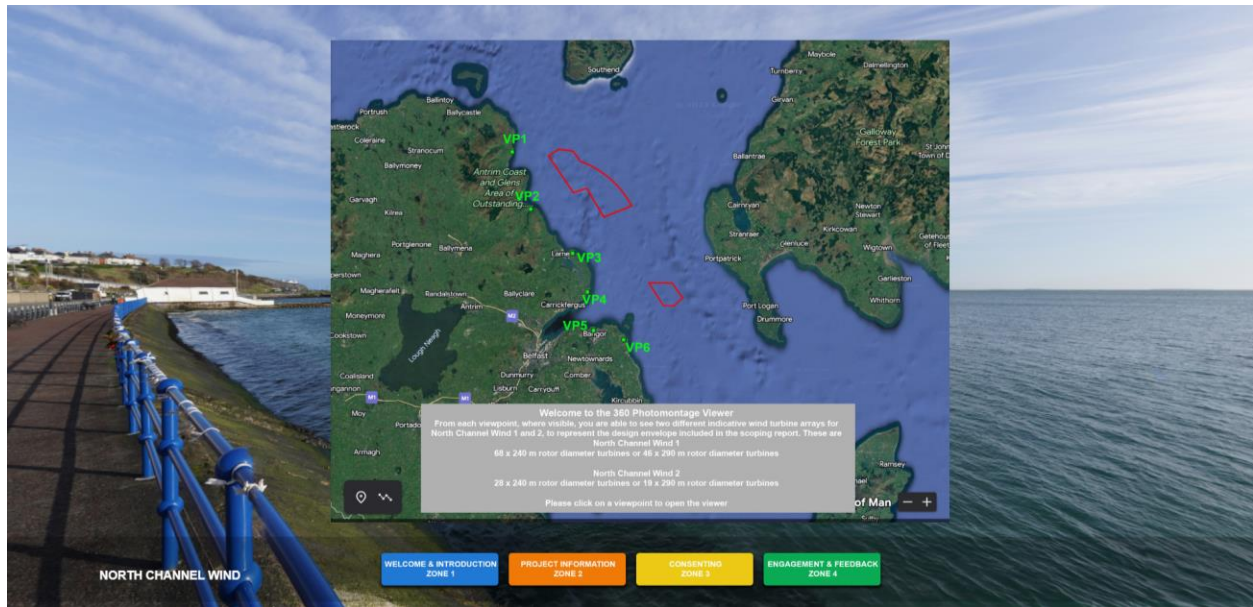
Users can watch an animated video, which shows the wind farms in relation to the coastline.





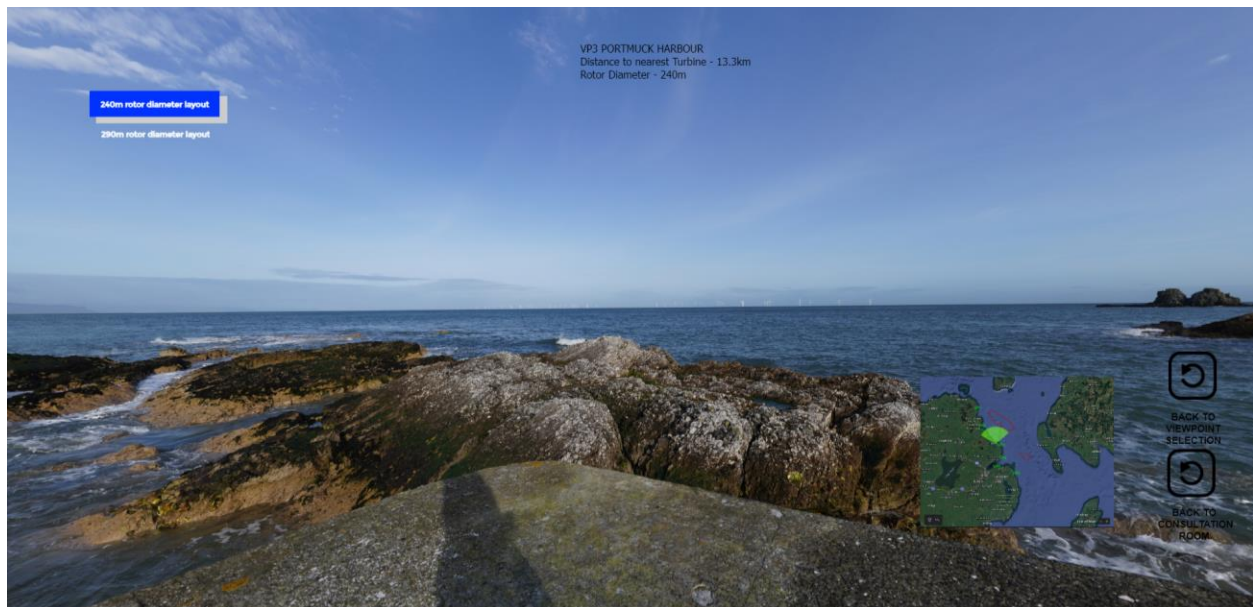
Photomontages are available in two formats: PDF versions or interactive digital 360 degree versions



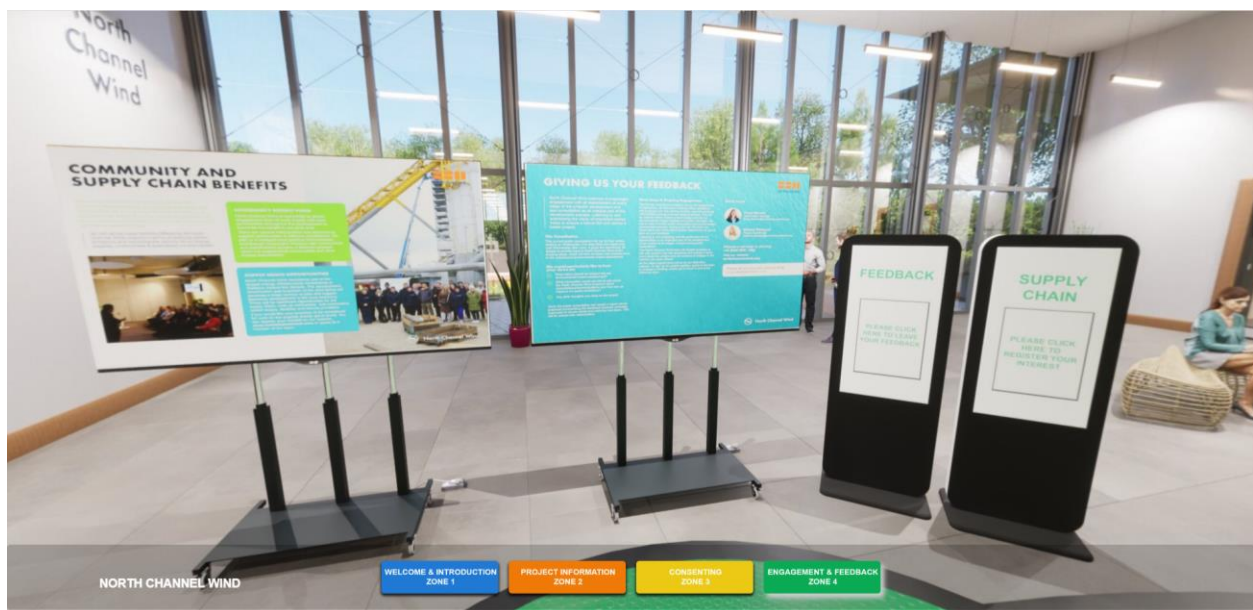


Using the map, users can select a viewpoint to view. Users are also able to select to view the 240m rotor or the 290m rotor layout for each viewpoint.





The feedback form and supply chain registration form are both accessible from the virtual consultation room, as well as directly from the project website.



Appendix E

Leaflet



North Channel Wind

Public Exhibitions & Consultation

North Channel Wind is exploring the potential for two floating offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea off the east coast of County Antrim and the north east coast of County Down.

We are currently at the scoping stage of development, and we would like to consult with local communities and other stakeholders, to help identify all the factors that need to be considered as we develop the projects going forward.

Have your say

Local exhibitions

We will be holding three local public exhibitions, designed to keep you informed and encourage feedback. These will be the first in a number of consultation opportunities as we work to develop and refine the proposals.

Attendees will be able to provide feedback and members of the North Channel Wind team will be on hand to answer any questions.

Online exhibition

In addition to the local exhibitions, all the information will be available online in our virtual consultation room, via our website www.northchannelwind.com.

The virtual consultation room will open from 31st May and comments forms will be available for you to leave your feedback. If you have any questions, please contact a member of our team and we would be happy to help. The closing date for comments during this consultation is the 28th of June 2023.

Comments received by North Channel Wind through the consultation will help inform the subsequent environmental impact assessment that will accompany any future application for a Marine Licence to construct and operate the projects.

Your feedback is really valuable because it helps us to improve the Project going forward, so please join us at your local exhibition or visit our virtual consultation room.

GLENLOUGH COMMUNITY CENTRE

60 Croft Road, Carnlough,
Ballymena, BT44 0EX
Wednesday 31st May 2023,
2pm - 8pm

THE GOBBINS VISITOR CENTRE

66 Middle Road,
Islandmagee, BT40 3SL
Thursday 1st June 2023,
2pm - 8pm

HAMILTON ROAD COMMUNITY HUB

39 Hamilton Road,
Bangor, BT20 4LF
Friday 2nd June 2023,
2pm - 8pm

At a Glance

North Channel Wind 1

Location	Off the eastern coast of County Antrim
Distance from Shore	The turbines are indicatively between 9 and 25 km (nearest to farthest) from the coast
Potential Capacity	The site could be capable of generating 1000 megawatts (1 gigawatt) of renewable electricity

North Channel Wind 2

Location	Off the south eastern coast of County Antrim and north coast of County Down
Distance from Shore	The turbines are indicatively between 14 and 24 km (nearest to farthest) from the coast
Potential Capacity	The site could be capable of generating 420 MW of renewable electricity



About North Channel Wind

North Channel Wind is a wholly owned subsidiary of SBM Offshore and the front end development work is being carried out by NMK Renewables Limited. SBM Offshore is a global market leader in floating offshore solutions for the energy industry. A deep-water specialist with over 60 years of experience and innovation, SBM brings engineering and technical expertise to the Projects.

NMK Renewables' team has decades of experience in the renewable energy sector and are passionate about delivering offshore wind projects that can enhance coastal communities and help Northern Ireland to achieve its energy and climate targets.

Key contacts



Fiona Stevens

Stakeholder Manager

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T +44(0)7380 426114



Melanie O'Driscoll

Project Coordinator

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If you would like more hard copies of this leaflet for your community noticeboard, please let us know. To opt out of our mailing list please contact Melanie using the details above. For more information on privacy please visit www.northchannelwind.com/privacy

Appendix F

Newspaper Advert



North Channel Wind

Public Exhibitions & Consultation

North Channel Wind is exploring the potential for two floating offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea off the east coast of County Antrim and the north east coast of County Down.

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Glenlough Community Centre

60 Croft Road, Carnlough, Ballymena,
BT44 0EX

Wed 31st May 2023, 2pm - 8pm

The Gobbins Visitor Centre

66 Middle Road, Islandmagee,
BT40 3SL

Thur 1st June 2023, 2pm - 8pm

Hamilton Road Community Hub

39 Hamilton Road, Bangor, BT20 4LF
Fri 2nd June 2023, 2pm - 8pm

Online exhibition

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Your feedback is really valuable because it helps us to improve the Project going forward, so please join us at your local exhibition or visit our virtual consultation room.

Contact Details

Fiona Stevens *Stakeholder Manager*

E fiona.stevens@northchannelwind.com

T +44(0)7380 426114

Appendix G

Copies of Press Releases:

County Antrim papers & County Down papers





Press release – County Antrim

Date: 18/05/2023

NORTH CHANNEL WIND TO CONSULT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON OFFSHORE WIND FARM PROPOSALS

Communities along the coast of east Antrim will have the opportunity to learn about proposals for the installation of floating wind turbines in the Irish sea, during local exhibitions on 31st May in Carnlough and 1st June in the Gobbins Centre, Islandmagee.

North Channel Wind says it is engaging with local communities with a view to sharing information and gathering feedback.

Fiona Stevens, Stakeholder Manager at North Channel Wind says the wind farms off the coasts of Antrim and North Down could be a game changer for Northern Ireland, bringing much improved energy security and the potential for Northern Ireland to become a net exporter of clean electricity.

“Offshore wind capacity is critical to NI’s target of reaching 80% renewable electricity by 2030 and zero net emissions targets,” says Mrs Stevens. “Department for Economy figures released last month show that Northern Ireland generated 51% of all electricity through renewables in 2022, so we are heading in the right direction, but still have a long way to go.”

The North Channel Wind project has the potential to generate electricity equivalent to around 82% of NI’s total electricity consumption, based on 2022 figures. The project could potentially save over 2.6 million tonnes of carbon emissions every year compared to the equivalent generation by non-renewables, the equivalent to taking over 1.7 million cars off the road.

“There is a collective understanding at policy level that the climate and biodiversity emergency is upon us and that we must move to embrace new forms of clean electricity generation. One solution is to install and operate floating turbines in the North Channel,” she says “which we aim to progress with the support of stakeholders through consultation and minimising the impact of the array on animals and natural habitats.

“We are proposing wind farms on two sites: North Channel Wind 1 is off the coast of east Antrim, and North Channel Wind 2 is off the south-east coast of Antrim and the north east coast of County Down.

North Channel Wind is engaging with Northern Ireland’s Department for the Economy, Department for Infrastructure and the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in relation to the consents required.

The project is backed marine engineering and offshore energy specialist SBM Offshore. The project would create significant local supply chain opportunities including the assembly of the required steel

floating devices, logistics, assembly, marine services and construction. In the longer term there is likely to be a community benefit fund linked to the project.

Mrs Stevens says: “We are in discussions with the Northern Ireland government, the grid operator SONI, the energy regulator UREGNI and The Crown Estate. Significantly, we have completed our site characterisation and submitted a scoping document to DAERA in early May. This is the first step in applying for a marine licence to build offshore infrastructure. The scoping report will be available as part of the public consultation and we welcome feedback.”

This series of community consultations is planned as follows:

2pm – 8pm, 31 May:	Glenlough Community Centre, Carnlough
2pm – 8pm, 1 June:	The Gobbins Visitor Centre, Islandmagee
2pm – 8pm, 2 June:	Hamilton Road Community Hub, Bangor

ends

Media contact: Joris Minne, joris.minne@jcomms.co.uk

Notes:

NCW 1

Potential installed capacity: 1000 MW

Potential electricity generation: equivalent to approximately 58% of NI’s electricity consumption based on 2022 consumption figures

Potential carbon reduction: Over 1.8 million tonnes per annum

NCW 2

Potential installed capacity: 420 MW

Potential electricity generation: equivalent to approximately 24% of NI’s electricity consumption based on 2022 consumption figures

Potential carbon reduction: Over 794, 000 tonnes per annum

Total NCW (NCW 1 plus NCW 2)

Potential installed capacity: 1420 MW

Potential electricity generation: equivalent to approximately 82% of NI’s electricity consumption based on 2022 consumption figures

Potential carbon reduction: Around 2.6 million tonnes per annum

Potential electricity generation equivalent has been estimated by dividing the estimated annual generation (for NCW 1 based on 1000 MW installed capacity or for NCW 2 based on 420 MW installed capacity) by the Dept. for the Economy’s figure for total electricity consumption in Jan-Dec 2022 ([Issue-26-Electricity-Consumption-and-Renewable-Generation-in-Northern-Ireland-January-2022-to-December-2022](#))), multiplied by 100.

Potential carbon reduction has been estimated by multiplying the estimated annual generation (for NCW 1 based on 1000 MW installed capacity or for NCW 2 based on 420 MW installed capacity) by the number of tonnes of carbon which fossil fuels would have produced to generate the same amount of electricity, based on the Dept. for Energy Security and New Zero’s “all non-renewable fuels” emissions statistic of 432 tonnes of carbon dioxide per GWh of electricity supplied in

the [Digest of UK Energy Statistics](#) (July 2022) Table 5.14 (“Estimated carbon dioxide emissions from electricity supplied”)

Equivalent cars taken off the road is calculated based on an average emissions factor of 133.7gCO₂/km at 11,280km/year: <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/NI%20Carbon%20Intensity%20Indicators%202022%20statistical%20bulletin.PDF>

Department for the Economy electricity generation statistics:
<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/Issue-26-Electricity-Consumption-and-Renewable-Generation-in-Northern-Ireland-January-2022-to-December-2022.pdf>



Press release – County Down

Date: 18/05/2023

NORTH CHANNEL WIND TO CONSULT WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES ON OFFSHORE WIND FARM PROPOSALS

Communities along the coast of North Down will have the opportunity to learn about proposals for the installation of floating wind turbines in the Irish Sea, during a local exhibition on 2nd June in Hamilton Road Community Hub, Bangor.

North Channel Wind says it is engaging with local communities with a view to sharing information and gathering feedback.

Fiona Stevens, Stakeholder Manager at North Channel Wind says the wind farms off the coasts of Antrim and North Down could be a game changer for Northern Ireland, bringing much improved energy security and the potential for Northern Ireland to become a net exporter of clean electricity.

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Media contact: Joris Minne, joris.minne@jcomms.co.uk

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Potential carbon reduction: Over 794, 000 tonnes per annum

Total NCW (NCW 1 plus NCW 2)

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