


**Cambois Connection – Marine Scheme
Environmental Statement – Volume 3
Appendix 4.1 Report on Public Consultation**

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BERWICK BANK WIND FARM – CAMBOIS CONNECTION

REPORT ON PUBLIC
CONSULTATION

May 2023



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1. Introduction

This report provides a summary of activity and high-level analysis following an in-person public consultation event which was conducted by SSE Renewables (SSER) in relation to the proposed development of the Berwick Bank Offshore Wind Farm (BBWF). Specifically, this relates to the Cambois Connection for the BBWF, which will export electricity from the BBWF to the existing Blyth substation in Northumberland near Cambois (the Project). The Cambois Connection will be consented separately from the BBWF whose consent determination is ongoing.

SSER held a public exhibition to allow members of the public to visit the exhibition, meet members of the Project team and ask questions on our proposals whilst they are still in the development stage.

This report summarises the event and details the key themes discussed with members of the public.

CONTACT DETAILS

For this event, the first point of contact for all queries from stakeholders was managed by the appointed Stakeholder Engagement Manager (SEM) – Gary Donlin. The SEM’s details were included on information letters issued to local residents in advance of the event.

Stakeholder Engagement Manager	Gary Donlin	07384 798 101
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2. Summary of events

The public exhibition was held at the below location and time:

- East Bedlington Community Centre, NE22 7JN
- 11th May 2023
- 13:00-19:00

This location was chosen as it is where the East Bedlington Parish Council host their meetings. East Bedlington Parish Council encompasses the local Cambois area. Locations were considered in Cambois, however these were not suitable.

The Project team have also written to the local Cambois Primary School to arrange a follow up event within the school at a time that suits all parties to ensure that anyone unable to travel to East Bedlington Community Centre can still meet members of the Project team.

2.1. EXHIBITION MATERIALS

The Project team compiled a variety of materials during the exhibition, which included the following.

- A4 information booklet
- Project information boards

- Maps showing the Offshore Export Cable Corridor for the Marine Scheme, within which the Offshore Export Cables will be installed

2.2. ADVERTISING

SSE understands that advertising the public consultation events is critical to gaining valued feedback. Details of the efforts made to highlight the events are as follows:

Local Newspapers - Advertisements were taken out in the following publications.

- Morpeth Herald 04/05 and 11/05 and digital package with approx. 100,000 impressions
- News Post Leader 05/05

In addition, we submitted a press release which was picked up in the following online publications:

ITV Tyne Tees (online + GMB morning, Tyne Tees lunchtime bulletin and evening news bulletin with interviews; Gary Donlin SSE Renewables and Ian Lavery MP): [Public get their say on multi-billion pound plans for offshore windfarm in Northumberland](#)

ITV News Tyne Tees Business Live/The Journal and The Chronicle(a): [Plans outlined to link Northumberland with giant offshore wind farm - Business Live \(business-live.co.uk\)](#)

The Chronicle(b) and Northumberland Live: [Northumberland residents invited to have their say on proposed offshore wind farm - Chronicle Live](#)

North East Times Magazine: [Event to showcase proposed SSE Renewables' Northumberland offshore energy link North East Times Magazine \(netimesmagazine.co.uk\)](#)

Bdaily: [Multi-billion pound Northumberland offshore project to create up to 9,000 jobs | Bdaily](#)

Northumberland Gazette: [Public invited to view proposals to connect Berwick Bank offshore wind farm to the grid at site near Blyth | Northumberland Gazette](#)

News Post Leader (part of Northumberland Gazette group): [Public invited to view proposals to connect Berwick Bank offshore wind farm to the grid at site near Blyth | Northumberland Gazette](#)

Insider Media: [Views sought on proposed multibillion-pound offshore project | North East Property News \(insidermedia.com\)](#)

Business News North East: [Consultation for proposed multi-billion pound offshore project in Northumberland opens to public - Business News North East](#)

North East Business News: [Plans to Link Northumberland with Giant Offshore Wind Farm \(northeastbusinessnews.org.uk\)](#)

Inkl.com: [Plans outlined to link Northumberland with giant... \(inkl.com\)](#)

MSN: [Plans outlined to link Northumberland with giant offshore wind farm \(msn.com\)](#)

Place North East: [SSE showcases plans for Berwick Bank - Place North East](#)

Radio Toon: <https://radiotoon.co.uk/northumberland-residents-invited-to-have-their-say-on-proposed-offshore-wind-farm>

Project Webpage - A dedicated webpage was set up by SSER to host information about the BBWF including the Cambois Connection and provide updates as the Project progresses - www.berwickbank.com

Email - Emails were sent to multiple organisations, affected stakeholders, elected councillors, MSPs, MPs and Parish Councils informing them of the events. All parties were invited to share notice of our events through their own contacts and channels. See section 5 Appendices for further information.

Mail Drop – A mail drop containing information on how people could attend the event was sent to all properties within a 2.5mile radius of NE24 1RD (Cambois postcode). The breakdown of properties and total amount of letters sent is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 - Number of letters sent inviting to the public consultation event in May 2023

Property Type	Number of Letters sent within NE24 1RD; 2.5 mile radius
Residential	27,514
Commercial	972
Total	28,486

3. Analysis of Consultation

At the in-person exhibition, approximately 50 persons attended the event to provide feedback on the Project and ask questions of the Project team.

3.1. FEEDBACK

The main issues addressed at the consultation event centred around the themes noted in bold below.

Attendees were also informed that they could submit an official feedback form to the Project team which was made available on the Project website (www.berwickbank.com). The feedback form was made available until May 31st 2023. No responses were submitted to the Project team via the online feedback form.

Visual Impact – Comments were received regarding the visual impact of the offshore array site in relation to Cambois. Once residents were made aware that the cables for the Cambois Connection will be installed subsea (offshore) and underground (onshore), and that the wind farm array area is approx. 180km away from Cambois, situated off the East coast of Scotland, these concerns were resolved.

Noise – Attendees raised concerns regarding both construction noise and operational noise that could be omitted as part of the proposals. Noise relating to onshore infrastructure was the primary concern. The team confirmed that a detailed noise assessment is being completed and will be included in full within the onshore EIA, however that initial modelling is indicating that noise levels are expected to fall within accepted limits.

Landfall – Attendees noted concerns on landfall construction works negatively impacting the Cambois beach and in particular, sand dunes, in the area. The Project team confirmed that trenchless techniques, such as Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD), would be used on these proposals which will allow the

Project to drill or tunnel underneath the beach/sand dunes and ensure that these sensitive areas are not disrupted because of construction works.

Wildlife Impacts – One attendee raised concerns on construction activities having a negative impact on some wild species, in particular bats. The Project team confirmed that ecological assessments will be undertaken to assess any potential impacts on local wildlife and ensure mitigation is in place where required. This assessment for the Onshore Scheme will also include a section specifically looking at bats.

Supply Chain – Several attendees commented on their desire to see economic benefit felt locally because of SSER proposals. Project team members took several details of local contractors, explained recent supply chain engagement activities, and confirmed that future engagement, specifically targeting the local supply chain would be undertaken in the event of successful consent applications.

STEM Engagement – Attendees commented that they would be keen to see SSER engage with local schools to help develop STEM sessions in the local area. The Project team took details of a local schoolteacher who attended and has since followed up to arrange sessions in the future. The Project team also confirmed they are committed to engaging in STEM activities with local schools and would be keen to explore opportunities wherever possible.

Community Benefit – SSE Renewables and the Berwick Bank Wind Farm team have already to date supported various local initiatives and it is the intention of the team to continue this as the Project progresses. Stakeholders commented on what local benefits the Project could create locally (apart from supply chain content.) The team confirmed that we are willing to engage with local community members to discuss various proposals on an AD-HOC basis and that long term a formal Community Benefit Fund (CBF) would be established, however this would most likely only occur following the decision of the planning process (decision expected at the end of 2023/beginning of 2024).

Fishing – Two local fishermen attended the consultation to state that they were not aware of a separate event (specifically targeting local fishermen) that had been held the evening before the public exhibition. The Project team took details of the fishermen and have since reviewed how fishermen are identified and contacted in the area by the Project's appointed Fisheries Liaison Officer.

Project timelines – Construction periods for the Project was raised on several occasions. The Project team confirmed that we could not currently confirm this due to variables regarding the consenting processes and commercial factors. However, the earliest realistic time frame for the Project would involve beginning construction in 2027/2028 – however this was subject to review due to an ongoing process looking to accelerate the then agreed Grid Connection dates. The Project team have committed to providing an update on Project timelines at a future exhibition to be held in Q3 2023.

4. Conclusion & Next Steps

This Report on Public Consultation documents the Public Consultation which has been undertaken for the Cambois Connection of the Berwick Bank Wind Farm in May 2023. The exhibition was designed to engage with key stakeholder groups, including the local community, landowners and individual residents, in order to invite feedback on the proposals. The Project team have committed to hosting a follow-up event in Q3 2023.

5. Appendices

Materials presented at Virtual Exhibition

All materials and exhibition boards presented at the Public Exhibition can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.berwickbank.com/library-downloads>

Advertisements issued in the press

The following advertisement was placed in both print and digital media:

Berwick Bank Wind Farm – Cambois Connection

11th May 2023
East Bedlington Community Centre
13:00 – 19:00

Berwick Bank Wind Farm is the largest offshore Wind Farm currently in development in the UK. Situated 38km off the coast of East Lothian, Scotland we will have a grid connection in East Lothian, Scotland and Cambois, Northumberland.

Please visit our public exhibition to hear more about our proposals regarding our potential Cambois Connection.

Find out more at www.berwickbank.com



Letters issued as part of maildrop

The following letter was sent to all properties within 3 miles of North Berwick, Dunbar, Innerwick & East Linton.



SSE Renewables
1 Waterloo Street
Glasgow
G26AY

By Email

Dear Resident

Berwick Bank Wind Farm - Cambois Connection

I hope this letter finds you well, I am writing to make you aware of some exciting developments we have made to our proposals for Berwick Bank Wind Farm, situated in the outer Firth of Forth in Scotland.

At 4.1 GW, Berwick Bank Wind Farm represents the largest offshore wind farm currently in development in the UK and in December 2022 we submitted planning applications to the Scottish Government for approval for the offshore elements of our site and for our onshore elements regarding our first grid connection in Scotland.

Following the National Grid's Holistic Network Design review. We are now consulting on our proposals for a secondary grid connection for the Project – proposed at Cambois.



This single site represents an opportunity capable of generating up to 4.1 GW of clean, renewable energy; with the ability of powering more than 5 million homes.

Ahead of our intention to submit a planning application to Northumberland County Council later this year, the Project team are hosting a public exhibition to present our proposals to the local community; details of which are below

Date – Thursday 11th May 2023

Time – 13:00 – 19:00

Location – East Bedlington Community Centre

We are extremely keen to discuss our proposals locally and gather feedback on our plans for the proposed Cambois Connection. If you would like to discuss this event in more detail, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Gary Donlin

Head of Offshore Stakeholder Engagement, GB

E: gary.donlin@sse.com

M: (0)7384 798 101



Stakeholders invited

Stakeholders from the following groups were all directly contacted and invited to attend the virtual consultation event:

Parish Councils

- East Bedlington Parish Council
- Cambois Community Association
- Ashington Town Council
- Blyth Town Council
- Newbiggin Town Council
- Lynemouth Parish Council

Political Stakeholders

- Ian Levy MP
- Ian Lavery MP
- Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP
- Cllr Glen Sanderson – Leader Northumberland County Council
- David Love – Planning case officer Northumberland County Council
- Cllr Graeme Miller
- Cllr Nick Kemp
- Cllr Richard Wearmouth
- Cllr Carl Johnson
- Cllr James Lang
- Cllr Eileen Cartie
- Cllr Brian Gallacher
- Cllr Lynne Grimshaw
- Cllr Kath Nisbet
- Cllr Kenneth Parry
- Cllr Mark Andrew Purvis
- Cllr Elizabeth M Simpson
- Cllr Jeff Reid
- Cllr Caroline Bell
- Cllr Daniel James Car
- Cllr Cliff Humphrey
- Cllr Wojciech Ploszaj
- Cllr Margaret Richardson
- Cllr Alex Wallace
- Cllr Anna Watson
- Cllr Louise Sprat

- Cllr Alison Sutherland

Other

- Advance Northumberland
- UK Government BEIS North East
- Department for International Trade – North East
- North East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Invest North East England
- North East England Chamber of Commerce
- North of Tyne Combined Authority
- Net Zero North East England
- North East England Climate Coalition
- Port of Blyth
- Blyth Harbour Commission
- Energy Central
- Energi Coast
- JDR Cables
- North Sea Link