



Meeting note

File reference	BC080001 – London Paramount
Status	Final
Author	Tayo Olaitan
Date	4 September 2014
Meeting with Venue	Representatives of London Resort Company Holdings The Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House
Attendees	For London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) Kevin Doyle – LRCH Chris Potts – Savills Planning Karl Cradick – Savills EIA Angus Walker – Bircham Dyson Bell Shabana Anwar – Bircham Dyson Bell Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Mark Wilson – Infrastructure Planning Lead Frances Russell – Environmental Services Team Will Spencer – Environmental Services Team Tayo Olaitan – Assistant Case Officer
Meeting objectives	LRCH to update the Planning Inspectorate on the status of their project, early public consultation events and key dates going forward. To raise any points for clarification and explain progress in respect of their Environmental Statement (ES).
Absentees	Kay Sully – Senior Case Manager (PINS); David Watts and Oliver Lowe – Consents Services Unit (PINS)
Circulation	All attendees and invitees
Duration	10 – 11.45am

PINS advised on its openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the PINS website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) and also to note that any advice given under s.51 does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Project Update by LRCH

Legal appointments

The legal team has been expanded to include appointments from Bircham Dyson Bell (BDB), Angus Walker and Shabana Anwar, for their specialist knowledge of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime.

Land Agreements

Land agreements are expected to be in place for the majority of the land required for the project. Heads of Terms have already been signed with LafargeTarmac one of the two most significant land owners involved; covering commercial and legal terms, and will come into effect in October 2014.

The same process is ongoing with EIGP (Lafarge Tarmac and Land Securities joint venture), the second of the two, to secure access to the proposed site. At the time of this meeting an agreement in principal had been achieved by reducing the land take for the access corridor, and was expected to be signed imminently. Once completed, 80-90% of the land needed for the project will have been secured, minimising the need for compulsory acquisition.

Other Potential Effects Identified

LRCH confirmed that they would be on a fast-track timeline going forward, and acknowledged that while Paramount's corporate view was in favour of the project, the UK planning process was perceived to be a barrier, when compared to continental models. However, the NSIP regime was seen as being beneficial to the project in terms of timelines to start construction.

The effect of the proposed Urban Development Corporation (UDC) being consulted on at the time of the meeting by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and which would have a remit to develop Ebbsfleet Garden City, had already affected LRCH's land agreement negotiations. Should the UDC be approved it could also have some influence on planning functions in the area, and its boundary would contain the Order Limit of the London Paramount project. A master plan and operational date for this UDC has been set for 2015.

The Highways Agency (HA) has highlighted the possibility that LRCH's proposals for access to the site from the A2 could be considered to be a private access off a trunk road. LRCH will shortly meet with HA to present their plans and clarify this issue.

Some responsibility for roads near the site also lies with Kent County Council, and a meeting with them is also proposed to occur shortly.

Design Approach / Master planning

Appointments made:

- Buro Happold,
- Farrells,
- WSP and a
- specialist tunnelling company.

A design team has been appointed and the design process is in ongoing. LRCH expects to be in a position to present some firm design modelling to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of September. Being mindful of the needs of the media they are proposing to have illustrative designs available for this purpose. The projections for the site are for 15 million annual visitors by year 5 after opening.

Their design team, who will be working within the Order Limit, are creating a 3D model for 'Rochdale' envelope purposes, but will also be presenting a code or design guide to accompany the model, to provide a clearer physical representation of how the site will look. There will eventually be sufficient site specific information about rides to show maximum heights, noise, light levels etc. which will give a good visualisation of indicative parameters.

Farrells' remit is to deal specifically with the master plan and issues wider than the red line boundary, to see how the project sits within the regional context. They have a good understanding of issues concerning the River Thames and will also consider public connections across and around the site, community access and the treatment of peripheral areas. Farrells' master plan is expected to be ready by the end of October, in preparation to brief a major funder of the project.

Site security will be established by landscaping and the use of appropriate materials to provide screening.

Consultation – first steps

The first stage of LRCH's public engagement programme took place in July, in Dartford and Gravesham. It was felt to have gone very well with approximately 1,000 feedback forms submitted, in addition to contributions made via Facebook and Twitter. The local community was keen to be asked for their input on how they wanted to be engaged in the future.

The plan is to consult on layout rather than options by using themed workshops as a starting point. The scope to consider options given the operational and land issues may limit some flexibility so the consultation may be along the lines of, 'what do you think of the location of' e.g. the bus station, rather than 'where do you want it to be'. LRCH will be seeking useful suggestions to make amendments rather than major changes.

The current plan is for there to be a single stage of formal s.42 consultation in April/May 2015, which will be preceded by a significant amount of informal consultation.

Working parties will consult informally with Statutory Consultees to draw them into the process. The Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) and other key bodies have indicated that they are keen to be involved.

Gravesham Borough Council and Dartford Borough Council are significant stakeholders and in contact with other key planners in the region; dialogue with them is intended to cover off such stakeholders, prior to making any submission to the Planning Inspectorate.

Discussions around the exact nature of the formal / informal consultation to be undertaken are still to be agreed and, LRCH is also mindful that the junction works on the A2, to be completed as part of the overall project, will be carried out by the HA, which will also have to consult the local community. As such there is a need to try and avoid consultation fatigue within the local community during this period.

Environmental Statement (ES) Update

LRCH advised that it intends to submit a Regulation 6 letter under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (EIA Regulations) to the Secretary of State with a request for a scoping opinion this October. This would be accompanied by a scoping report. LRCH is aware of the need to submit a shapefile of its draft Order Limit at least ten working days before the request for a scoping opinion was submitted.

Work on the EIA scoping report was at an advanced stage and they would be requesting comment on approach /methodology. A copy of the report's outline contents page was passed around during the meeting and PINS advised that it agreed with the approach taken. LRCH confirmed that lighting impacts would be considered under the heading of landscape and visual, and requested further comments from PINS on the proposed content of the scoping report prior to submission.

PINS requested that LRCH provide a copy of its contacts list, i.e. those bodies with which they have already discussed the project, for example the EA and NE. This would feed into the Regulation 9 list of consultation bodies (EIA Regulations), to ensure that the relevant contacts were consulted on the scoping opinion.

LRCH again requested feedback from PINS should they become aware of any points of concern, as they were keen to avoid any future problems.

Public perception – correspondence received at PINS

PINS highlighted a letter they had responded to on behalf of the Minister of State for Transport, Baroness Kramer, which raised concerns about the project and the potential for construction jobs being allocated outside of the local community.

PINS reminded LRCH that although employment issues would be addressed in the socio-economic part of the ES, it should also take account of the wider effects that the General Election might have in terms of heightening public perceptions and debate, and use this opportunity to address fully the whole socio-economic picture.

LRCH acknowledged the advice given and confirmed that there would be a job centre on site prior to construction starting. It is considered that the project was popular with the local community and that they had a good story to tell in this respect. However, this point would now be taken away and looked at further.

Specific points raised by PINS

PINS agreed that the design process and level of detail outlined during the meeting appeared to be acceptable, and was comparable to offshore wind farms in the level of detail proposed.

PINS advised LRCH to give full consideration to the integration of options and site selection in their formal public consultation exercise and to having more than one formal stage. They were reminded that the process was supposed to be consultation and not presentation, and that it was important to avoid favouring significant informal consultation which consequently minimised the role of formal consultation.

PINS mentioned that given the intended submission date of August 2015, the election in May will not affect the examination; however, it might be the case that during the purdah period local authorities might be more reluctant to sign off Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) or other planning agreements unless delegations are in place that would allow officers to do this.

PINS highlighted the assistance available to LRCH from the Consents Service Unit (CSU) based within PINS, in respect of concurrent consent requirements that fall outside of their Development Consent Order (DCO) application. LRCH confirmed that it had been in contact with the CSU.

Other Business

LRCH tabled the option of PINS's case team personnel viewing the project's branding presentation at some point in the future, as a means of explaining the wider national interest aspects of the project. They emphasised the fact that the overall project will be an entertainment resort rather than a theme park, as is currently on offer in the UK.

PINS agreed that this might be beneficial, however, in the interests of remaining impartial it was suggested that PINS might attend at a time when the presentation was being given to local authorities.

LRCH advised that they were likely to have draft application documents available for comment in May 2015 and agreed PINS would update their website with a submission date of August 2015. A new public enquiry email address would also be provided for the PINS website in due course.

LRCH advised that there would be a public event prior to the next meeting in mid-October and PINS would be provided with the associated information in advance of that meeting to enable feedback to be provided.

Action Points and follow up required

LRCH

- To provide PINS with its most recent consultation material prior to the next meeting in October
- To provide PINS with a new public email address for their website
- To re-examine its approach to the provision of socio-economic material in the ES in light of the enquiry received by the Secretary of State for Transport
- To submit its Regulation 6 and 8 documents (EIA Regulations) to PINS as advised/requested

PINS

- To update the PINS website with LRCH's application submission date and new public enquiry email address when provided
- Provide comment on the public consultation material to be supplied by LRCH at the next meeting in October

LRCH & PINS – Next Meeting

11am Tuesday 14 October 2014, London