



## Meeting note

<b>File reference</b>	EN010012
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
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<b>Date</b>	16/04/14
<b>Meeting with</b>	EDF Energy (EDFE), Suffolk Coastal DC (SCDC) and Suffolk CC (SCC)
<b>Venue</b>	EDF Energy Offices, London
<b>Attendees</b>	Mark Wilson – Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Tim Norwood - EDF Energy Stephen Walls - EDF Energy Michael Wilks – Suffolk County Council Philip Ridley – Suffolk Coastal District Council
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Update on Hinkley Point C and Sizewell C Projects

### Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

#### EDF Energy Update

##### Hinkley Point C (HPC)

HPC is progressing on a number of fronts; negotiations with potential investment partners continue; the earth works on the HPC site is likely to move to Phase 2 in May under the Site Preparation Works planning permission; and a Final Investment Decision is expected to be made later this year. EDFE are currently bringing forward some highway improvements such as Sandford Corner given the delay to the start of the construction programme.

The Suffolk Councils asked about the merits and dis-benefits of using a TCPA application to bring forward certain works such as earthworks ahead of the DCO application. EDFE commented that while it gave them flexibility in terms of the construction programme, it also created complexity in terms of drafting the DCO and co-ordination more generally with other consents. From a purely EDFE perspective the preliminary works application did bring a number of benefits and helped to create momentum to progress with the HPC project generally. PINS commented that from its perspective, in hindsight, the actual benefits in terms of flexibility and timescales were marginal at best in the case of HPC, and that this strategy ran contrary to one of the

main purposes / benefits of the DCO regime in that it was designed to be a simplified "one stop shop". PINS would continue to advise applicants against pursuing an unnecessarily fragmented / incremental consent strategy, alongside the DCO process. However, there is no legal impediment in principle to bringing forward NSIP applications in this way.

Sizewell C (SZC)

Since the last tripartite meeting in October EDFE have identified their preferred locations for the North and South Park and Ride sites, accommodation campus and refined rail route / alignment options into the site. PINS commented positively about the EDFE update video in this regard:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2VoZIPXctuU>

PINS commented that based on experience on other projects, it was important that EDFE were as transparent as possible about the methodology used in any site selection process during the pre-application consultation stage. PINS accepted that there would always be a subjective element to any process of this nature, based upon professional opinion; however where weighting had been attached to any criteria used to identify preferred sites then it was good practice to share this information with key stakeholders such as LPAs, or more widely if appropriate.

EDFE were ready to issue their scoping report to PINS, and to request an EIA scoping opinion. PINS commented that given that the scoping consultation period is 28 calendar days, it was welcomed that EDFE had agreed to wait until after the Easter break to submit their report to allow consultees the maximum amount of time to provide a well-considered response.

EDFE had been in contact with The Major Infrastructure Environment Unit (MIEU) to discuss the production of an HRA evidence plan.

The Stage 2 consultation on the preferred options was currently projected to take place in the autumn, although no firm decision on dates had been taken.

### **Update from the Suffolk Councils**

The Councils requested to be kept more abreast of consultation activities undertaken by EDF in between the key stages of consultation, noting they would be asked to comment on the Adequacy of Consultation if an application is submitted. PINS noted this would be helpful.

The Councils commented that they would be interested in any information EDFE were willing to share about the detail of their site selection methodology.

The Councils further commented that since the last tripartite meeting a number of workshops had taken place. Following on from comments at the last meeting the Councils and EDFE had undertaken some work to try and rationalise and gain a better understanding of the cross-cutting issues that did not fall neatly into single topic-based workshops. There was a general acknowledgement that the workshops would need to be carefully managed to ensure that cross-cutting issues were dealt with effectively, but the outcome of the session between EDFE and the Councils was positive.

The Council's asked whether there was any support available for parish councils to assist them with responding to the anticipated EIA scoping report. PINS commented that advice about the EIA scoping process had already been provided to TASC via email and that any parish councils that were not sure about the scoping consultation process could contact PINS using the contact information provided on the letter.

The Suffolk Coast Energy Board has been set up to provide a single group in Whitehall that will facilitate the interactions between the various NSIPs being brought forward in the County. The Board contained various topic-based sub groups including those dealing with housing, transport, the supply chain and skills.

## **PINS Update**

### 2014 Review

PINS described some of the likely changes that were being considered as a result of the 2014 Review of the NSIP planning regime.

A number of changes are being proposed which are likely to be relevant within the context of the SZC project timeline. A Pre application prospectus will be published that will set out a more structured approach to support and guidance by PINS NI case team. Other measures which are being considered are the publication of all application documents by PINS at the point of submission, rather than after acceptance; further CLG guidance on Statements of Common Ground; clearer guidance on post submission changes; improved guidance on Preliminary Environmental Information, and a new process for post consent changes.

### Outreach Feedback

PINS reflected on the outreach event arranged by Together Against Sizewell C (TASC) in January. The event was well attended and advice was provided about the iterative approach to consultation at the pre application stage. The presentation given is published on the SZC project page. PINS commented that there was a general lack of understanding in the community about the level of detail presented at the stage 1 consultation. Perhaps more could be done by everyone to clarify that the purpose of the early stages of the pre application consultation process is to develop design and project principles that would be built on in later consultation stages. People need to know that the matters and proposals being consulted on are not in their final form, and that the consultation information is not "the application".

At the event there were specific questions concerning the statutory EIA scoping process and the ability of non-statutory parties to have their say on the scoping report prepared by EDFE. PINS advised that the scoping process was defined in regulations and that if TASC considered the ES to be inadequate in any way then they would have the opportunity to put these views forward in writing and orally at the examination.

TASC wished to have an input into the adequacy of consultation representation that relevant local authorities would be invited to submit. PINS advised that only local authorities can provide an adequacy of consultation representation. If consultees are unhappy with the pre application consultation then they should contact the developer in the first instance and allow them to respond to or remedy any deficiencies. If they were still dissatisfied they should contact their local authority and copy in PINS if they

wished; however, PINS would only make a definitive decision about the qualitative aspects of the pre application consultation at the acceptance stage (post submission).

PINS recommended to the local authorities that they prepare some kind of feedback pro-forma for members and officers to complete after attending EDFE consultation events. This would assist them to keep an audit trail of attendees that could feed into their adequacy of consultation representation. The responses could be included as an annex to the representation if the Council wanted to submit them at that time. It was up to the local authorities what they did with any consultation feedback responses received by individuals or community groups.

PINS commented that it was good to see that the Councils appeared to be engaging effectively with EDFE about their application. It is important that, regardless of the "in principle view" of a local authority about an NSIP project, that they contribute to the pre application process to help make the final application the best it can be once it is submitted. There is nothing to be gained by local authorities, either politically or at officer level, refusing to engage with a developer at the pre application stage on a without prejudice basis.

**END**