



Meeting note

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Date	31/10/13
Meeting with	EDF Energy (EDFE), Suffolk Coastal DC (SCDC) and Suffolk CC (SCC)
Venue	EDF Energy Offices, London
Attendees	Mark Wilson – Planning Inspectorate (PINS) Frances Russell – PINS Sheila Twidle – PINS Tim Norwood - EDF Energy Stephen Walls - EDF Energy John Pitchford – Suffolk County Council Philip Ridley – Suffolk Coastal District Council
Meeting objectives	Update on Sizewell C Project (SZC)

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

EDFE Update

EDFE provided an update of how the Hinkley Point C project was progressing and in particular, about recent announcements regarding the CfD agreement reached with Government about the “strike price”. It was also confirmed that EDFE now had letters of intent with new equity partners. EDFE explained that a number of further conditions need to be met before a Final Investment Decision could be made in 2014.

EDFE explained that as a result of the progress made on the Hinkley Point C project, EDFE continue to make steady progress on the SZC project.

Following the first stage of SZC pre application consultation, EDFE have been reading and considering the responses received. There have also been a series of workshops with statutory consultee bodies and the local authorities. There have been 12 workshops so far looking at various topics such as design, agreeing view points for the visual analysis of the scheme, transport, associated development and the impact of the project on designated sites. Survey work has also progressed with ground and seabed investigations. EDFE have also held a meeting with the Major Infrastructure and Environment Unit (MIEU). Further meetings are planned. In general, PINS advised

that early engagement with MIEU and the key statutory nature conservation bodies was vital. This would aid the development of evidence plans.

The Suffolk Councils mentioned that they were progressing with their own workshops involving the voluntary and non statutory sector stakeholders.

PINS asked in general terms whether consideration had been given to using other land in the wider Sizewell Nuclear complex as an alternative to land-take elsewhere. The Suffolk Councils commented that they had raised this on a number of occasions in the past too. They sought confirmation from EDFE that the reasons for not using land around SZA and B stations was for practical and safety reasons, rather than corporate / organisational reasons.

EDFE said the Plans for SZC did include the re-use of land currently used by some SZB ancillary buildings (e.g. the SZB visitors centre) and studies for these enabling works continue. EDFE were clear that there was no scope to use SZA or B operational land beyond the enabling works.

EDFE asked PINS for advice on the EIA scoping process as it related to SZC. PINS commented that the timing of any scoping request, in terms of the level of detail provided about the project, would determine the extent to which PINS could scope out specific matters. The more information provided the more likelihood PINS would have the confidence to scope out matters. PINS encouraged EDFE to make a scoping request and commented that the scoping process often resulted in useful local knowledge being provided by consultees. The timing of any scoping request should take account of ongoing consultation about SZC and other planning and DCO applications in the area, so as to avoid both confusion and consultation fatigue.

EDFE currently intend to hold a further stage of consultation on their preferred options later in 2014.

Update from the Suffolk Councils

SCC and SCDC commented that the workshops held to date had been very productive. In particular a set of design principles had been progressed by the councils in relation to the main buildings. The objective was to develop a settled local position on the design principles to feed into the next stage of consultation.

The Councils commented that there were many cross-cutting issues and that this sometimes made it difficult to discuss matters at topic based workshops because the inter-relationships were not clear. However, they recognised that the scale of the project meant this was an inevitable problem, but were interested to know if EDFE could consider how this could be managed. EDFE acknowledged this and would consider this further.

The Suffolk Councils commented that following the stage 1 consultation their biggest issue remained the lack of a "4 villages" bypass in the SZC plans. However, the Councils were keen not to let this prevent a constructive and pragmatic approach being taken in relation to the pre application consultation being undertaken.

The Councils enquired whether EDFE planned to review their Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) in advance of the next stage of consultation. EDFE commented that this was something they would consider in the context of a review of their wider work programme and any further formal consultation.

The Councils asked PINS whether greater clarity could be provided about the consistency of approach being taken by different examining authorities working on different examinations. The Rampion and East Anglia 1 applications were referred to and in particular the differences in approach with regard to the subject matter at hearings and the written questions. PINS commented that work was ongoing to try and establish some consistency in working practices between different examining authorities. PINS recognised that there was a need for some certainty among participants in the process about what to expect at an examination. However, it was unlikely that a fully consistent approach could ever be achieved due to the varying nature of the projects that were handled by PINS, their differing geographical locations and the consequent implications these variables would have in terms of how examination timetables were developed and implemented. It was suggested that any views the Councils had in this regard should be put to DCLG who were in the process of preparing for a review of the Planning Act 2008 regime in 2014.

PINS Update

PINS provided feedback about recent outreach meetings and events held in respect of SZC. In particular, a meeting held in London with Friends of the Earth on 25 June 2013 and with Minsmere and Sizewell Parishes Stakeholders group on 24th October. A further outreach meeting is planned in January involving the group "Together Against Sizewell C".

Following the event on 24th October PINS commented that there seemed to be uncertainty generally about what had been done with the responses to the first round of consultation. It appeared to be that the hiatus in the SZC pre application consultation process, as a result of the negotiations with Government on the strike price and other matters, had caused a degree of anxiety and frustration in the community in terms of the pre application process. As a result there was a perception that negative views were continuing unchecked at present. PINS advised EDFE to consider ways to deal with this. EDFE commented that they will hold a Community Forum event in November and were in the process of producing a further community newsletter where some explanation would be given. Newsletters are widely distributed in the consultation area.

PINS mentioned that a request had been made at the event on 24th October for the first stage consultation responses to be made public. EDFE commented that the first stage consultation responses were still being considered and that it would not serve the process for them to be published before EDFE had the opportunity to consider and respond to the issues raised.

PINS asked EDFE whether they intended to publish an interim consultation report. EDFE commented that at Stage 2 of the Hinkley Point C proposals a Stage 1 consultation report was produced and they would consider this in relation to SZC.

PINS explained that the emphasis in the presentation given on the 24 October was to reassure those present that the pre application process was an iterative process, and in that context greater detail would be provided at future consultation stage(s).

PINS recommended that EDFE contact the Consent Services Unit in PINS who would be able to provide them with specific advice about the development of a consents and permitting strategy. This would aid coordination with the DCO application process.

PINS advised that applicants should look for opportunities to reduce the size of their Environmental Statements (ES) by avoiding repetition. This often occurs where different consultants have been working on the same ES; however, a sensible editing process should assist in cutting out unnecessary repetition.

Under the Habitats Regulations; it is worth remembering that it is the SoS who is the competent authority who will undertake the Appropriate Assessment and this should be kept in mind when preparing information in order to ensure this is as clear as possible. Advice Note 10, which deals with HRA matters, has recently been reviewed and republished and this includes matrices which should be used by applicants. Advice Notes 4 and 5 which deal with section 52 and section 53 requests for information about land and access to land respectively have been reviewed and were published in October 2013.

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