



## Meeting note

<b>File reference</b>	EN010034 Avon Power Station
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	Ewa Sherman
<b>Date</b>	23 October 2014
<b>Meeting with</b>	ScottishPower
<b>Venue</b>	Conference Room 3, Temple Quay House, Bristol BS1 6PN
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Planning Inspectorate:</b> Ewa Sherman – Case officer Tom Carpen – Infrastructure Planning Lead David Price – EIA and Land Rights Manager Oliver Lowe – Consents Service Unit Lead <b>Applicant:</b> George Camps – ScottishPower (Project Lead) Steve Marshall – ScottishPower (Planning and Consents Lead) Peter Hulson – Arup (Planning and Consultation) Richard Lowe – URS (Environmental Impact Assessment)
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update on proposals for Avon CCGT Power Station
<b>Circulation</b>	All attendees

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

The applicant was reminded of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy that any advice given will be recorded and published on the planning portal website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) (PA 2008) and that any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which the applicants (or others) can rely.

### Introduction

The applicant re-introduced the team representing ScottishPower which is part of the Iberdrola Group, and provided an update on the activities undertaken at the site and the continuing pre-application dialogue with the host local authority South Gloucestershire Council (SGC).

The applicant advised that proposal lies in an established industrial area with access to the National Grid connections nearby and good existing infrastructure. Additionally, it advised that adjacent land use activities offer opportunities for shared infrastructure.

The applicant advised that the proposal is supported in principle by Local Plan policy through the adopted SGC's Core Strategy. The plot owned by the applicant is 113 acres (45 ha) and has sufficient area to accommodate the proposed development including; substations, carbon capture, laydown areas and the CCGT power station.

The applicant explained that site and surrounding area is subject to an extant 1957 planning consent granted to the ICI chemical works at the time.

## **Project update**

### **Proposal**

The applicant outlined the options for generating up to 1800MW, comprising up to 1500MW CCGT, advising that the exact configuration and manufacturer would be determined post consent, primarily due to the rapidly evolving nature of the CCGT technology. The proposal is expected to also include a fast response 'peaking plant' (ie the ability to meet peaks in electricity demand quickly) in addition to combined cycle turbines. The fast response peaking plant will be for intermittent use and capable of up to 300MW output

The applicant stated their intent to use the 'Rochdale Envelope' approach for the environmental impact assessment (EIA). The design currently includes options for two configurations and options for different cooling systems. At this stage it is too early to determine whether the design will include single shaft or multi shaft technology so this matter would be decided post consent. The applicant confirmed that a worst case scenario will be adopted that addresses the parameters required in the DCO. However, the applicant is aware of the need to provide justification for the parameters included and the chosen worst case scenario in both the DCO and the ES.

PINS advised that the applicant is able to seek flexibility in its design; however, the applicant will need to take particular care in ensuring that the worst case scenarios are representative of the potential combinations. The applicant was advised that the inclusion of greater flexibility within the DCO can complicate the assessment process. The applicant was advised to ensure that the assessment should not be presented in an over-complex manner so that it is difficult to understand.

### **Cooling**

While the conceptual design is being prepared for the EIA process the applicant is currently considering whether to include air cooling, direct water cooling or a hybrid approach and has been in informal discussions with the Environment Agency, Natural England and both Bristol and Wessex Water. It is likely to refine its options for the environmental scoping and consultation stages of pre-application: however, all options are being reviewed by the design team.

### **Gas and grid connections**

The applicant explained the surrounding infrastructure in terms of grid and gas connections and PINS sought an understanding of what could be expected in the DCO and what was reliant on other consents / developments.

For the gas connection, discussions have been ongoing with National Grid and local landowners to provide a connection to the national network and resilience, and that a connection to the network would be part of the DCO. However, any wider national network development and re-inforcement would be outside of this DCO.

The applicant outlined its plans in relation to the securing a 15-year contract for an electricity capacity agreement, through the capacity auction mechanism. Provided the DCO application is submitted in 2015, followed by the decision in 2017, the applicant intends to enter the capacity market in 2018 to allow for commencement of the electricity generation four years later.

The applicant is considering options for its grid connection. The applicant intends to include in the DCO connection to a 400kV connection to either an existing or if required new substation.

No requests for compulsory acquisition powers for gas or grid connections are anticipated; however, this is subject to reaching agreement with landowners. Compulsory Acquisition may be required for a water connection.

### **Traffic and Transport Assessment**

The applicant explained that the wider area of 630 acres has the benefit of a broad consent for general development given by the Secretary of State in 1957, with limited powers of control, and no obligation to provide mitigation. The surrounding area is currently being developed for a range of uses and this raises cumulative impact issues, particularly in terms of traffic.

The Highways Agency has provided advice regarding network constraints and transportation routes. The applicant confirmed that its baseline evaluation, including traffic data and road accident data, is nearing completion. Potential impacts are being considered, among them the traffic impact during the construction phase, mostly limited to A403 and local motorway junctions. The applicant advised that operational phase traffic impacts are anticipated to be negligible and a potential new M49 junction is being investigated. (Post-meeting note – a new junction proposed on the M49 was announced as part of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement)

The level of traffic generated by the proposal may depend on discussions regarding flood risk, and whether the applicant would raise the level of the land. SGC and Bristol City Council (BCC) are currently looking at the localized flood defences as this area is subject to flooding, and the outcome will inform the approach taken by the applicant. ScottishPower has the potential to develop a rail connection but its viability is a concern given there would be limited need for a rail connection post construction.

The applicant and PINS agreed to consider this issue in more detail during further pre-application meetings.

### **Design**

The applicant and PINS discussed issues relating to the way how to handle design in the context of a master plan approach. The applicant advised that it was in discussion with both CABE and South Gloucestershire Council, and that its current consideration is that it could use design codes to inform detailed design. However, it was not able to commit to detailed design or materials that would ultimately make the scheme

undeliverable. The applicant advised that it was seeking to work towards Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) on this matter linked to the design codes and suitable requirements, intending to deliver a reasonable and practicable proposal. While the Rochdale Envelope approach allows for flexibility in the design, the applicant is aware that the local authority would require some degree of certainty as to the design quality.

PINS advised that the pre-application stage gave the applicant the time to explore the views of various bodies and that the National Policy Statements set out broad policies on design and the need for good design. PINS advised the applicant to remain open-minded at this stage to take account of the views it may receive during the consultation period. Also, during an examination any Examining Authority has the scope to ask questions of all parties with views on design if there was disagreement at that stage. PINS encouraged the use of a Statement of Common Ground, and also advised the applicant that requirements should then clarify how the agreed design parameters will lead to the final approved designs.

The following issues are currently being discussed with the EA: CCGT process, land quality, flood risk, ecology, Carbon Capture Readiness, Combined Heat and Power assessment and potential effluent, atmospheric and noise emissions.

### **Consultation**

The applicant advised that it would continue to build on its original non-statutory engagement with consultees, and start with 'refreshed consultation', as the original Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) had been published in June 2011, and it is currently being updated and revised. The applicant will also update the project website. Public exhibitions which are part of the 'Refreshed non-statutory Stage 1 Consultation' are programmed for December 2014/January 2015.

PINS advised the applicant to be aware of the local authorities' availability during the Christmas holidays and sought reassurance that both Councils are prepared for the consultation period.

The developer explained that they have been engaging with two neighbouring Parish Councils (Aust and Olveston), in addition to the non-statutory consultation already undertaken with Pilning and Severn Beach and Almondsbury Parish Councils.

PINS queried whether any powers of compulsory acquisition would be sought as part of the DCO application. The applicant advised that it is in discussions with local landowners.

### **European Protected Species**

The proposal site is not located within any designated area and no UK priority habitat has been identified within the site boundary. Habitats within the site are hardstanding (areas of crushed rubble and tarmac): patches of grassland and scrub, and water bodies: two storm-water reservoirs and a main rhine. The applicant advised that currently no Protected Species licences are confirmed as being required as the land is quite barren (and therefore unlikely to provide suitable habitat for such species) and a bat licence relating to the demolition of structures on the site has already been issued for the site. The applicant advised that this will continue to be monitored in case the situation changes.

## **PINS pre-application service**

PINS advised that it had recently revised its pre-application service and had the ability to support all stakeholders to identify and help identify issues at the pre-application stage. PINS and the applicant agreed to draw up a contact plan linked to the applicant's timetable towards submission of the DCO application. PINS also advised that it can provide comments on the draft application documents, such as the Development Consent Order, the No Significant Effect Report or the HRA Report.

## **Consents Service Unit (CSU)**

PINS asked whether the applicant had identified any other consents it needed that fall outside the Development Consent Order, and advised the applicant to contact PINS' Consents Service Unit. The applicant confirmed that it has already been in discussions with relevant consenting bodies, and as mentioned previously it has secured a Bat Licence from Natural England.

## **Next steps**

The applicant outlined its programme for the next few months and stated that the anticipated date for submission of the DCO application is Q4 of 2015.

ScottishPower is drafting the Scoping Report due for submission to the Environmental Services Team in December 2014. PINS advised the applicant not to submit the Report too early when there is still too much flexibility or too many options regarding the design of the project and reminded that before formal consultation under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 can commence, the applicant needs to notify under Regulation 6 of the EIA Regs.

PINS also discussed a level of engagement with the applicant, through issuing s51 advice and regular update meetings.

## **Specific decisions / follow up required?**

PINS will send an example of a draft Consents Plan to the applicant who will then be able to make decision whether to use the pre-application service offered by CSU.