



Meeting note

File reference	EN010055
Status	Final
Author	Siân Evans
Date	23 November 2017
Meeting with	Wrexham Power Limited
Venue	Temple Quay House
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Siân Evans (Case Officer) Helen Lancaster (Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Karen Robb (Operations Support Assistant) Wrexham Power Limited Daniel Chapman Rupert Wood Mark Brown
Meeting objectives	Wrexham Energy Centre feedback meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

Introduction

Wrexham Power Limited (the Applicant) and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate outlined its openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant (or others) can rely.

Non-statutory and statutory consultation

The Inspectorate noted that the Applicant had addressed several of the community's concerns that had arisen from the non-statutory consultation by changes proposed to the project.

Planning Inspectorate staffing

The Applicant questioned whether it was standard practice that the Case Manager assigned at the pre-application stage then managed the project through the Examination stage of the application as they were concerned there may be some preconceived ideas about the project. The Inspectorate advised that, where possible,

the same Case Manager will be appointed from pre-application through to the decision stage of the application as this helped with continuity for all parties involved and provided a better understanding of the project. Case team staff were committed to the Inspectorate's values of impartiality, fairness and openness.

Examination

The Applicant considered that there is potentially wasted expense in witnesses attending hearings unnecessarily and would therefore appreciate more careful timetabling to avoid this happening. The Inspectorate noted that detailed hearing agenda drafting can help in managing this.

The Applicant found the early DCO hearing, which was held after the preliminary meeting, useful. It identified early on where the Examination was going to focus and assisted the local community in understanding the importance of the DCO document.

The Applicant explained that they considered the local community misunderstood the Rochdale Envelope approach, which meant that they were focussing on the wrong things. The Applicant advised that it would be helpful if the Inspectorate could provide further advice on the Rochdale Envelope which would be more suitable for those unfamiliar with planning and the PA2008.

The Applicant advised that they were frustrated in the Examination by the same questions being repeated on occasions. The Inspectorate advised that if a question is repeated it is likely that the Examining Authority (ExA) considers the question has not been fully answered. If the Applicant considers that it has been and cannot provide any further information then they should signpost the ExA to where the information is within the application documents or Examination submissions.

The Inspectorate advised that the Accompanied Site Inspection was well run and the Applicant conducted themselves very well. The Applicant queried why the ExA invited a local resident, who appeared at the ASI, to the Open Floor Hearing when they had not previously registered. The Inspectorate advised that if a party shows an interest in a project, and is entitled to make a representation, they will be given the opportunity. Persons attending site inspections should not make their representations at the inspection, but should be informed of their opportunities to be heard at subsequent hearing sessions. The Applicant also advised that it would be helpful to be notified when late submissions are published.

The Applicant advised that while they understand the need for notices they consider the amount of text required in notices is excessive and queried whether it should still be necessary to place notices in newspapers. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to take this up with the Department for Communities and Local Government, as the regulations and PA2008 set out what notices need to be published, and the content on these.

The Applicant commented that while they recognised the desire to promote the Welsh language they considered the translation requirements excessive. The Inspectorate advised that for all projects now submitted in Wales they will follow the Planning Inspectorate's Welsh Language Scheme.

AoB

The Applicant advised that they consider there should be a register of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) so that NSIPs are picked up in land searches. This would have avoided the issue with the solar farm, which wasn't aware of the Wrexham Energy Centre NSIP when they submitted their planning application. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to take this up with the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Applicant advised that the local council had not worked on a NSIP before the Wrexham Energy Centre application was submitted and enquired whether the Inspectorate could educate local authorities in this position. The Inspectorate advised that outreach to local councils and communities is limited by resources however the need for this is considered on a case by case basis. The Inspectorate confirmed that a presentation on the PA2008 process was given by Inspectorate staff to the local authority and local community prior to submission of the application.

The Inspectorate also highlighted the Advice Notes and guidance videos available on the National Infrastructure Planning website which provided useful guidance on how the process works and how local authorities can engage in the process.