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Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Bristol, BS1 6PN

Customer Services: 0303 444 5000
e-mail: MeafordEnergyCentre@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Your Ref:

Our Ref: EN060004

Date: 17 July 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

Planning Act 2008 (as amended) – Section 88 and the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rules 4 and 6

Application by Meaford Energy Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Meaford Energy Centre

Notice of Preliminary Meeting, availability of relevant representations and appointment of the Examining Authority

The Secretary of State has appointed me to act as the Examining Authority (ExA) to carry out an examination of the above proposal by Meaford Energy Limited (**see Annex F**).

This letter is an invitation to the Preliminary Meeting to discuss the examination procedure and contains a number of supporting annexes. I would like to thank those of you who submitted relevant representations. These representations have assisted me when preparing my proposals for how to examine this application.

Date of meeting: 20 August 2015

Registration begins: 9.30am

Meeting begins: 10.00am

Venue: Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre
Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfields, Staffordshire, ST15 0NL

Access and parking: Please use sports field adjacent to the restaurant for car park. Signage will direct you along the guest drop off road to the temporary car park.
<http://www.yarnfieldpark.com/contact/locationand-travel-o>

The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to enable views to be put to me about the way in which the proposal is to be examined. It is important to appreciate that this meeting deals only with procedure, and not the merits of the proposal. The merits of the proposal will only be considered once the examination starts after the Preliminary Meeting has closed.

The Planning Inspectorate will send you a copy of my procedural decision as to how the proposal is to be examined as soon as practicable after the meeting.

I wish to run a fair, efficient and effective meeting so that all relevant views can be heard. As such, I strongly encourage groups of individuals who have similar views on the procedure to choose one representative to speak for the group.

The agenda for the meeting is in **Annex B**. This has been set following my initial assessment of the principal issues arising on the proposal. That assessment is set out in **Annex C**. As a result of this assessment I wish to hear at the meeting from the Applicant, interested parties, statutory parties and local authorities where they consider changes may be needed to the draft timetable set out in **Annex D**.

Up to date information about the project and the examination can be obtained from:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/meaford-energy-centre/>

This is the address from which I will make copies of all future communications and examination documents available to the public.

Further information is given in Advice Note 8.4, which is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website (<http://bitly.com/1DWa7q7>).

Attending the Preliminary Meeting

If you wish to attend the Preliminary Meeting please write, email or telephone the Planning Inspectorate, using the address and contact details set out at the front of this letter marking correspondence for the attention of Kay Sully, Case Manager. We need to receive your confirmation **by Thursday 6 August 2015**. Please also refer to **Annex A** for administrative arrangements for this meeting.

It will help the management of the meeting and benefit everyone if you also:

- Tell us whether you wish to speak at the meeting and on which agenda items, listing points you wish to make; and
- Notify us of any special needs you may have (eg Disabled access, hearing loop etc)

The Preliminary Meeting provides a useful introduction to the examination process. I will use it to make procedural decisions that will affect everyone participating in the examination. The meeting provides you with an opportunity to have your say about procedural issues before these decisions are finalised. If you intend to play an active part in the examination or you have questions about procedure it is useful to attend the meeting. However, please note that you are not required to attend the Preliminary Meeting in order to participate in the examination. If you are an interested party you will still be able to make written representations and participate in any hearings that are

arranged. Should you no longer wish to be an interested party and do not wish to be involved in the examination process, you can notify the case manager of this in writing.

After the Preliminary Meeting

Shortly after the Preliminary Meeting you will be sent a letter setting out the timetable for the examination. The audio recording and a note of the meeting will also be published on the project page of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

Interested parties have the right to request an open floor hearing. Any other issue specific hearings are at the discretion of the ExA and will be arranged if I feel that consideration of oral representations would ensure an issue is adequately considered. My examination will comprise of written representations about the proposal and any oral representations made at the hearings, in addition to consideration of the project documents, policy and legal positions, site inspections and any other matters I consider to be relevant and important.

All relevant and important matters will be taken into account when I make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate, who will take the final decision in this case.

Procedural decisions made by the ExA under ss89(3) and 93(1) of the Planning Act 2008

I have made some preliminary procedural decisions. These include the setting of deadlines for the agreement and submission of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG); the notification by interested parties of the wish to be heard at an open floor hearing; the notification by statutory parties, or a local authority without direct responsibility in the proposed development area, of the wish to be considered an interested party; requests for the provision of further information and the acceptance of other information from the Applicant. These procedural decisions are all set out in full at Annex G.

Your status in the examination

This letter has been sent to you because you (or the body you represent) fall within one of the categories in s88(3) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).

If you are not an interested party or a prescribed consultee (i.e. body specified in the relevant regulations supporting the PA 2008), you have received this letter because I wish to invite you to the Preliminary Meeting as an 'other person' because it appeared to me that the examination could be informed by your participation.

If you have made a "relevant representation", have a legal interest in the land affected by the proposal or are a relevant local authority, you have a formal status as an interested party in the examination process.

Interested parties will receive notifications from the Planning Inspectorate about the examination throughout the process and may make written and oral submissions regarding the proposal.

If you are a prescribed consultee (i.e. body specified in the relevant regulations supporting the PA 2008) but have not made a relevant representation you will not automatically be an interested party. However, following the Preliminary Meeting, you will

have a further opportunity to notify the Planning Inspectorate that you wish to be treated as an interested party.

If you are not sure whether you are an interested party, please contact the case manager using the details at the top of this letter. Information regarding the formal status of interested parties and how you can get involved in the process is set out in the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 8 on our website (<http://bit.ly/1zdsVW5>).

Award of costs

I also draw your attention to the possibility of the award of costs against interested parties who behave unreasonably. You should be aware of the relevant cost guidance that applies to National Infrastructure Projects. The "Awards of costs; examinations of applications for development consent orders" is available on our website (<http://bit.ly/1ODUUFi>).

Management of Information

The Planning Inspectorate has a commitment to transparency. Therefore, all information submitted for this Project (if accepted) and any record of advice which has been provided is recorded on the Planning Inspectorate website together with the name of the person or organisation who asked for the advice. The privacy of any other personal information has been protected in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's Information Charter.

I look forward to working with all parties in the examination of this Application.

Yours faithfully

David Richards

Examining Authority

Annexes

- A** Administrative arrangements for the Preliminary Meeting
- B** Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting
- C** Initial assessment of principal issues
- D** Draft timetable for examination of the Application
- E** Availability and inspection of representations and documents
- F** Notice of appointment of Examining Authority
- G** Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority

Advice may be given about applying for an order granting development consent or making representations about an application (or a proposed application). This communication does not however constitute legal advice upon which you can rely and you should obtain your own legal advice and professional advice as required.

A record of the advice which is provided will be recorded on the National Infrastructure Planning website together with the name of the person or organisation who asked for the advice. The privacy of any other personal information will be protected in accordance with our Information Charter which you should view before sending information to the Planning Inspectorate.

Administrative arrangements for the Preliminary Meeting

On arrival at the venue you will be asked to register your name and any unique reference number with staff of the Planning Inspectorate. Priority will be given to the applicant and those registered as interested parties, statutory parties, local authorities and invited persons before seating is allocated to other members of the public. The Examining Authority may exercise its discretion to permit any person, in addition to those who are entitled to take part, to participate in the meeting.

If you wish to make any submissions on matters not set out in the agenda, please write to Kay Sully, Case Manager, setting out the submissions that you wish to make **by Thursday 6 August 2015**. I will attempt to accommodate reasonable requests and will alter the agenda on opening the Preliminary Meeting if I consider this will assist the discussion of the procedure for the examination.

A note will be taken of the Preliminary Meeting. This will be published on our website and made available at the locations listed in Annex E as soon as practicable after the meeting. Please note that an audio recording of the meeting will also be taken and made available on the website as soon as practicable after the meeting.

The Planning Inspectorate will send you a copy of the procedural decision as to how the application is to be examined as soon as practicable after the meeting.

Agenda for the Preliminary Meeting

Date: Thursday 20 August 2015

Meeting Start Time: 10:00am

Venue: Yarnfield Park Training & Conference Centre
Yarnfield Lane, Yarnfield, Staffordshire, ST15 0NL

09:30	Registration
10:00	Welcome and Introductions
10:15	Examining Authority's remarks about the examination process
10:30	Initial assessment and principal issues – see Annex C
10:45	Submissions received before the beginning of the examination
10:55	Draft timetable for the examination – see Annex D
11:00	Deadlines for submission of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All written representations • Local Impact Reports • Responses to ExA's written questions • Statements of Common Ground • Revised Draft DCOs • Notifications relating to hearings
11:30	Break
11:45	Hearings and accompanied site visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of accompanied site visit to application site and surrounding area • Date of issue specific hearing on draft Development Consent Order • Dates reserved for open floor hearing(s) • Time period reserved for issue specific hearings • Time period reserved for compulsory acquisition hearing
12:15	Any other Business
12:30	Close of the Preliminary Meeting

Please note: The timings above are only indicative; please register and be available from the start and throughout the meeting. If the discussion takes less time than anticipated, the ExA will conclude the meeting as soon as all relevant contributions have been made. If there are any additional matters to be dealt with or submissions take a considerable amount of time, the meeting may run for longer and the order of items may change.

Initial assessment of principal issues

This is the initial assessment of the principal issues arising from consideration by the Examining Authority of the application documents and relevant representations received.

It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list of all relevant matters. The Examining Authority will have regard to all important and relevant matters when it writes its recommendation to the Secretary of State after the examination has concluded.

Policy

- Compliance with National Policy Statements, the NPPF and development plan policy

Design, Layout and Visibility

- The design concept and process
- Landscape and visual effects, in particular effects on nearby residents, Downs Banks, the Local PROW network and the Trent and Mersey Canal
- How good design will be secured through the provisions of the DCO
- Limits of deviation, and how these will be treated in the DCO
- Mitigation

Biodiversity, Ecology and Natural Environment

- Adequacy of baseline assessment
- Adequacy of proposed mitigation

Transport and Traffic

- Traffic movement and routeing during construction
- Effects on service providers and emergency services
- Aviation

The Historic Environment

- Effects of the project on the settings of heritage assets, particularly the Trent and Mersey Canal and associated structures

Other Environmental Issues, including issues related to:

- Airborne emissions and air quality
- Noise, dust and vibration during construction and operation

Operational matters

- Implications of different operational scenarios as set out in paragraph 4.8 of ES 6.1 Volume 1 (Non Technical Summary)'

Compulsory Acquisition

- The need for the land proposed to be subject to compulsory acquisition
- The need to establish a compelling case in the public interest
- Financial arrangements and compensation

The Development Consent Order (DCO), including issues related to:

- Protective provisions
- Requirements

Draft timetable for examination of the application

The Examining Authority's (ExA) examination of the application takes the form of consideration of written representations about the application. The ExA will also consider any oral representations made at the hearings. The ExA is under a duty to **complete** the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.

Item	Matters	Due Dates
1.	Preliminary Meeting	Thursday 20 August 2015
2.	<p>Deadline 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of wish to speak at an open floor hearing • Nominations of locations to be inspected during accompanied site inspections, the features to be observed there, with reasons for each nomination 	Thursday 20 August 2015
3.	<p>Issue by ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination timetable • ExA first written questions (publication) • Notification of dates for hearings and accompanied site visit 	<p>As soon as practicable</p> <p>No later than Thursday 27 August 2015</p>
4.	Date reserved for an Accompanied Site Visit	Tuesday 22 September 2015
5.	Date reserved for an Open Floor Hearing	Tuesday 22 September 2015
6.	<p>Deadline 2</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification from statutory parties, or a local authority without direct responsibility in the proposed development area, of a wish to be considered an interested party • Post-hearing documents including written summaries of oral cases, of any evidence or documents presented, or amendments requested by the ExA • Comments on relevant representations (RRs) • Summaries of all RR's exceeding 1500 words • Written representations (WRs) by all interested parties 	Monday 28 September 2015

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summaries of all WRs exceeding 1500 words • Local Impact Report from any local authorities • Statements of Common Ground requested by ExA – see Annex G • Responses to ExA's first written questions • Notification of wish to speak at an issue specific hearing • Notification of wish to speak at a compulsory Acquisition hearing • Any other information requested by the ExA 	
7.	<p>Issue by ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of dates for hearings and accompanied site visit 	Thursday 1 October 2015
8.	<p>Deadline 3</p> <p>Deadline for receipt by the ExA of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on WRs and responses to comments on RRs • Comments on Local Impact Reports • Comments on responses to ExA's first written questions • Any other information requested by the ExA 	Thursday 22 October 2015
9.	Date reserved for issue specific hearing on environmental matters	Tuesday 10 November 2015
10.	Date reserved for Issue specific hearing on DCO	Wednesday 11 November 2015
11.	Date reserved for Compulsorily Acquisition Hearing	Thursday 12 November 2015
12.	Date reserved for Accompanied Site Visit (if required)	Thursday 12 November 2015
13.	<p>Deadline 4</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Statements of Common Ground • Post-hearing documents including written summaries of oral cases, of any evidence or documents presented, or amendments requested by the ExA; 	Thursday 19 November 2015

	<p>Revised draft DCO from the applicant taking into account all issues raised at hearings and in RRs/WRs (including both clean and track-change versions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	
14.	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ExA's second written questions (if required) 	Thursday 26 November 2015
15.	<p>Deadline 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to ExA's second written questions (if required) 	Tuesday 8 December 2015
16.	<p>Date reserved for Issue Specific Hearing on DCO (if required)</p>	Tuesday 15 December 2015
17.	<p>Date reserved for Issue Specific Hearing on Environmental matters or Compulsorily Acquisition Hearing (if required)</p>	Wednesday 16 December 2015
18.	<p>Deadline 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Statements of Common Ground • Post hearing documents arising from hearings including written summaries of oral cases put, of evidence and of any documents or amendments requested by the ExA; • Revised draft DCO taking account of issues raised and comments into account (clean and track-change) • Revised Book of Reference taking into account all issues raised at hearings and in RRs/WRs (including both clean and track-change versions) • Any further information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Tuesday 22 December 2015
19.	<p>Publication of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ExA's Draft DCO <p><i>A banner on the Meaford Energy Centre project pages of our website will be updated on this day to reflect which document has been published.</i></p>	Thursday 7 January 2016
20.	<p>Deadline 7</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses to ExA's second written questions (if applicable) • Responses to ExA's draft DCO • Responses to revised Book of Reference • Any other information requested by the ExA 	Thursday 21 January 2016

21.	Reserved for any R17 request for further information (if required)	Thursday 28 January 2015
22.	<p>Deadline 8</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on responses to ExA's draft DCO • Comments on responses to revised Book of Reference • Responses to any R17 requests for further information • Any other information requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Thursday 4 February 2016
23.	<p>Deadline 9</p> <p>Deadline for receipt of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments on any responses to R17 request • Any other comments requested by the ExA for this deadline 	Thursday 11 February 2015
24.	The ExA is under a duty to complete the examination of the application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the close of the Preliminary Meeting.	Saturday 20 February 2016

Publication Dates

All information received will be published on our website as soon as practicable after the deadline for submissions:

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/meaford-energy-centre/>

Hearing Agendas

Please note that we will aim to publish a detailed draft agenda which will be published on our website approximately seven calendar days before the hearing is due to take place but will not otherwise be published or circulated.

The actual agenda on the day of each hearing may be subjected to change at the discretion of the ExA.

Annex E

Availability and inspection of representations and documents

On our website:

<http://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/west-midlands/meaford-energy-centre/?ipcsection=overview>

For inspection and copying:

Stone Library

High Street
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 8AT

Opening times:

Monday	9.00am – 5.00pm
Tuesday	9.00am – 6.00pm
Wednesday	9.00am – 1.00pm
Thursday	9.00am – 5.00pm
Friday	9.00am – 6.00pm
Saturday	9.00am – 4.00pm
Sunday	Closed

Copying charges:

Black and White A4/A3	10p/20p
Colour A4/A3	50p/£1.00

For inspection and copying:

Holmcroft Library

Holmcroft Road
Stafford
Staffordshire
ST16 1JG

Opening times:

Monday	9.00am – 1.00pm / 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Tuesday	2.00pm – 7.00pm
Wednesday	9.00am – 1.00pm / 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	2.00pm – 7.00pm
Saturday	9.00am – 1.00pm
Sunday	Closed

Copying charges:

Black and White A4/A3	10p/20p
Colour A4/A3	50p/£1.00

For inspection and copying:

Blythe Bridge Library

Uttoxeter Road
Blythe Bridge
Stoke-on-Trent
ST11 9JR

Opening times:

Monday	1.00pm – 7.00pm
Tuesday	9.00am – 1.00pm / 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Wednesday	Closed
Thursday	9.00am – 1.00pm / 2.00pm – 6.00pm
Friday	9.00am – 1.00pm / 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Saturday	9.00am – 1.00pm
Sunday	Closed

Copying charges:

Black and White A4/A3	10p/20p
Colour A4/A3	50p/£1.00

Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (as amended) – Rule 4

Application by Meaford Energy Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Meaford Energy Centre

Notice of appointment of Examining Authority

On 24 June 2015 a single examining inspector was appointed to hold the examination of the above application under Section 79 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended).

The single examining inspector is:

- David Richards B Soc Sci, Dip TP, MRTPI

Pauleen Lane

**Dr Pauleen Lane CBE FICE MBA
Group Manager, National Infrastructure
On behalf of the Secretary of State**

Procedural decisions made by the Examining Authority (ExA)

The ExA has made the following procedural decisions under Sections 88(3), 89(3) and 93(1) of the Planning Act 2008:

1. Acceptance of other information from the Applicant

On 24 June 2015 Meaford Energy Centre wrote to the Planning Inspectorate and submitted an updated Book of Reference which the Examining Authority when appointed, has accepted into the examination.

2. Invitation to statutory parties, or a local authority without direct responsibility in the proposed development area.

The deadline for a statutory party who has not made a relevant representation, or a local authority without direct responsibility in the proposed development area, to notify the ExA of their wish to be considered an interested party is **Tuesday 28 September 2015**.

3. Invitation to Other Persons.

Under s88(3) of the PA2008 and Rule 6(1) of the Examination Procedure Rules, the ExA is able to invite Other Persons to attend the hearings and participate in the Examination. The ExA has decided to invite the following to become Other Persons: -

- Historic England
- Natural England

4. Notification of wish to be heard at an open floor hearing

The deadline for an interested party to notify the ExA of their wish to be heard at an open floor hearing is **Thursday 20 August 2015**.

5. Statements of Common Ground (SoCG)

In relation to some of the principal issues identified in Annex C, the ExA would be assisted by the preparation of SoCGs between the applicant and certain interested parties. The draft timetable for the examination therefore provides a deadline for submission of SoCGs.

The aim of a SoCG is to agree factual information and to inform the ExA and all other parties by identifying where there is agreement and where the differences lie at an early stage in the examination process. It should provide a focus and save time by identifying matters which are not in dispute or need not be the subject of further evidence. It can also usefully state where and why there may be disagreement about the interpretation

and relevance of the information. The reasons for the differences and interpretation of the implications of a difference can then be expanded in the evidence. Unless otherwise stated or agreed, the SoCG should be agreed between the applicant and the other relevant interested party or parties, and submitted by the applicant.

SoCGs are requested to be prepared by:

- A. **The applicant and Staffordshire County Council** to include:
 - Traffic movement and routeing during construction

- B. **The applicant and Stafford Borough Council** to include:
 - Effect on Heritage Assets, including the Trent and Mersey Canal
 - Compliance with Development Plan Policy
 - DCO measures to secure good design

- C. **The applicant and the Environment Agency** to include:
 - Airborne Emissions and Air Quality
 - Noise, dust and vibration during construction and operation

The ExA's advice is that the SoCGs should cover the following topics where relevant:

- Methodology for environmental impact assessment including assessment of cumulative effects
- Data collection methods
- Baseline data
- Data/statistical analysis, approach to modelling and presentation of results (including forecast methodologies)
- Full expression of expert judgements and assumptions
- Identification and sensitivity of relevant features and quantification of potential impact
- Likely effects (direct and indirect) on special interest features of sites designated or notified for any nature conservation purpose
- Feasible and deliverable mitigation and method for securing such mitigation within the DCO