

Meeting note

Project reference	EN010068/ EN010069
Status	Final
Author	Adam Price
Date	10 July 2014
Meeting with	Millbrook Power Limited/ Abergelli Power Limited
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	Applicant Chris McKerrow Nick Johnson (MPL) Sarah Merritt (Pinsent Masons) Paul Wormald (PBA)
	Planning Inspectorate Tom Carpen (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Adam Price (Assistant Case Officer) Linda Rossiter (EIA & Land Rights Advisor) Jenny Colfer (Senior EIA & Land Rights Advisor)
Meeting Objectives	Initial meeting with the Planning Inspectorate to introduce the Millbrook Power and Abergelli Power projects.
Circulation	Meeting attendees

Summary of Key Points and Advice Given:

Introduction

The Planning Inspectorate outlined its openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate's website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 ('PA 2008'). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the applicant (or others) can rely.

Millbrook

Project Information

The site chosen for this project is located primarily on land within former clay pits known as 'The Rookery' which is comprised of the Rookery North and Rookery South Pits. The developer advised that it was chosen due to its

proximity to the national gas and electricity network. The site is subject of a restoration scheme by the landowner. Further to this, extraction of clay from a currently un-worked area to the south, will be undertaken and deposits won will provide material for use in the restoration.

The project would include the construction of a Single Cycle Gas Turbine (SCGT) with a capacity of up to 299 MW, a connection to the 400kV National Grid Electricity Transmission System (NETS) and a new gas pipeline. The connection to the NETS is said to require the construction of a new electrical substation.

The developer stated that there is currently the option for up to 5 stacks at a height of up to 60m however it is believed that any stacks will be closer to 45m in height.

The Planning Inspectorate advised that where flexibility is sought, the options should be consulted on, the worst case scenario tested in the environmental statement and measures secured in the development consent order on how the final design will be achieved.

Consultation

The developer explained that the red line boundary of the proposal falls within Central Bedfordshire Council and adjacent to Bedford Borough Council. Discussions are said to be ongoing with both authorities

The developer explained that the Rookery South pit was outlined in the Bedford Local Plan as being for waste allocations or local carbon use.

The developer explained that they had been in contact with various parish councils which helped to form the defined area for their Core Consultation Zone (CCZ). This was said to be a 5km radius within which there were approximately 10,000 residents.

Non-statutory consultation has been undertaken by the developer using this CCZ and included a mail drop and several exhibitions. The developer explained that the exhibitions were well attended with over 250 people visiting over the course of 3 days.

Gas and Electrical Connections

The developer advised that they plan to include both electrical and gas connections in the DCO as integral to the power station.

The developer advised that they were in early discussions with National Grid over the options for the electrical connection and that a TEC application is to be submitted to National Grid Electricity Transmission in the near future.

Abergelli

Project Information

The developer explained that the proposal is for an up to 299MW SCGT power station to be constructed in an area to the north of Swansea, Wales. The chosen site is situated on low quality agricultural land currently used for sheep grazing, there is a history of coal mining in the area and there are a number of solar projects in the vicinity. Gaining access to the site from the M4 will be problematic as the site is far from any public highway.

A number of construction access routes are currently being considered. The preferred option would be to use the route currently utilised by National Grid (NG), consequently the developer is engaging with NG, with the aim of coming to an agreement.

Gas and Electrical Connections

The developer explained that there are currently three potential options for the gas connection, though a preferred route has been identified. The location of the solar farm is a potential issue for the preferred route, however this is not thought to be insurmountable. It is still likely that there will be two or three options for the gas pipe route at the Preliminary Environmental Information Report stage, but this will be narrowed to one option at the point the application is submitted, if not before. The preferred option is said to be approximately 1km from the project site and is included within the red line boundary along with the other options until a final option is decided upon.

The developer stated that the application site is located approximately 350m from an electrical substation and as such there would be no requirement to construct a new substation as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO).

As the electrical connection will only need to cover 350m there is potential that it may be laid underground. Two routes are being considered for the electrical connection, the approach from the south is preferred as this route is less ecologically sensitive and will not need to cross a gas pipeline.

Consultation

The developer stated that, as with Millbrook, some non-statutory consultation had been undertaken to date. This involved 3 exhibitions which were said to have attracted over 90 people across the 3 days.

The developer asked about the possibility for an 'outreach' event to be held at the Examination stage of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) process to explain to consultees, such as Parish Councils, the process of making and submitting representations. The Inspectorate explained that there may be an opportunity to discuss such matters during the Preliminary Meeting, which would be held during the Pre-Examination stage, should the eventual application be accepted to proceed to Examination.

The developer explained that a draft TEC application had been submitted to NG however nothing had yet been confirmed at this stage.

The developer stated that there seemed to be some confusion from consultees on the purpose of the PEIR. The Inspectorate advised that information on the PEIR could be provided during exhibitions, and that advice is available in PINS advice notes. Overall, the PEIR is a snapshot of the development of environmental information. It advised the applicant to be mindful of requests for more detailed information if it was considered absent in the PEIR, and to reflect this in its consultation report.

Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)

The developer explained that they had been proactive in terms of engagement for the production of SoCGs for both projects and as such it had helped to identify issues as early as possible. The developers asked if the Inspectorate has a dialogue with the various statutory consultees in relation to the preparation and awareness of SoCGs. The Inspectorate confirmed this and explained that Pre-Application advice is still evolving, however it was said that face-to-face meetings on such matters had proven useful in the past.

Consents Service Unit (CSU)

The Inspectorate explained the role of the CSU, stating that this is a free service offered to developers to discuss consents that fall outside of the Development Consent Order (DCO). The developers stated that in respect of Millbrook it is anticipated that all the Great Crested Newts will have been cleared as part of a translocation programme currently being undertaken within The Rookery.

Future Meetings/ Contact Plan

The Inspectorate explained the option of developing a 'Contact Plan' with the developers as part of the new Pre-Application Prospectus which was introduced in May 2014. The developers agreed to consider the option and would follow up with a proposed plan, should they choose to adopt this approach.

The Inspectorate indicated its intentions to hold a meeting with the local community and the developers which is anticipated to be in September.