



Meeting note

Project name	Hinkley Point C New Nuclear Power Station Material Change 1
File reference	EN010102
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	12 May 2020
Meeting with	NNB Generation Company (HPC) Limited (the Applicant)
Venue	Online Meeting
Meeting objectives	Project progress update for the Hinkley Point C material change request application.
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which Applicants (or others) could rely.

Hinkley Point C project update

The Applicant provided an update regarding the Hinkley Point C project:

- There is a reduced workforce on site due to impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) situation with social distancing practices in place including the use of thermal imaging cameras to test workers temperatures before they enter the site
- Significant progress was being made on Unit 1 with the intention of lift dome at the end of 2021
- The first of three Tunnel Boring Machines was at 'full bore' and it was 600-700 meters into the Bristol channel
- Unit 2 was also progressing well
- The Applicant is trying to minimise the effect from Covid-19 on the construction timetable and said that it is too early to understand if there will be an impact.

Update on material change application

The Applicant spoke about how it was still in regular contact with the Environment Agency (EA) regarding the current application to amend the Environmental Permit for Water Discharge Activity to remove the requirement to install an Acoustic Fish Deterrent (AFD) at the entrance to the two cooling water intake tunnels. As noted previously, the Applicant explained that its intention is to reach a point where the EA were minded to approve the amendment to the permit before it submits the material change application to the Inspectorate. Based on current discussions, this is likely to be around Q3 2020. The Applicant stated that other than general resourcing and changes to working arrangements, the impacts of Covid-19 has not restricted the ongoing dialogue between the Applicant and the EA in relation to this project.

The applicant was in the early stages of preparing Statements of Common Ground with the likes of the Local Authorities in preparation for the submission of the application.

Update on the Non-Material Change application

The Applicant said that the Non-Material Change (NMC) request regarding the plot-plan was still being progressed. The Applicant anticipates this will be submitted around the end of Q2 2020 although this is subject to the Applicant, who is currently awaiting a response from the Department for Business, Environment and Industrial Strategy regarding the Applicant's consultation list.

Update on any impacts of Covid-19

The Applicant stated it has continued its engagement with the Local Authorities and other stakeholders and has been in contact with the Department for Work and Pensions to establish whether, as a significant local employer, the Hinkley Point C Project could help support the local economy following any potential impact that Covid-19 has on the area.

The Applicant asked whether the Inspectorate was able to provide any advice or guidance on how the Applicant should approach their duties in relation to consultation in order to fulfil its obligations in accordance with the Regulations during the Covid-19 situation. The Inspectorate explained whilst it was aware of the current difficulties' Applicants are experiencing in seeking to discharge some of their duties, particularly in relation to making documents (hard copy and electronic) available at public deposit locations, the Regulations remain in force and the Applicant was advised to take reasonable and proportionate steps to make documents available to members of the public.

The Inspectorate encouraged the Applicant to monitor progress of other projects that have already been submitted. There are projects currently in pre examination and examination stages of the PA2008 process that will be considering how to approach examinations under current circumstances.

The Applicant asked whether Covid-19 has had an impact on the Inspectorate's resources and ability to process casework. As the Government is clear that it is important to keep the planning system operating effectively and safely, in support of this, the Inspectorate has been exploring ways to help reduce the impact whilst still processing casework with projects at various stages of the PA2008 and has recently had a NSIP application submitted during Covid-19 which was accepted for examination on 4 May.

Virtual events

The Applicant asked the Inspectorate for an update on what it is currently doing in relation to digital working. The Inspectorate advised that a lot of work has already taken place including ongoing testing and the first virtual hearing for the Inspectorate under the TCPA 1990 is due to take place on 11 May 2020.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that progress on testing virtual hearings was ongoing and may provide an option for future examinations. However, the Inspectorate emphasised that the process was still a primarily written process.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that it hoped to be able to provide more detailed advice as the situation develops, and in the meantime, to regularly check the guidance on the Inspectorate's website which is available in relation to Covid-19:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-planning-inspectorate-guidance>.

Any other business

The Applicant asked what the process was for reviewing draft documents, whether there was an appetite to continue with this service in current circumstances and if so, the timescale for the Inspectorate to review and provide comments.

The Inspectorate confirmed that the draft documents review could still be undertaken however advised the Applicant that this could take up to 3 months depending on factors such as the size, scale and number of draft documents submitted. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that should they decide to send any documents for review, to highlight any novel or specific issues that it wishes the Inspectorate to focus on. The Inspectorate encouraged the Applicant to give consideration to this in their programming and to discuss timings of any potential draft document submission with the Inspectorate's Case Manager.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate and the Applicant agreed to set-up another project update meeting in due course.