

Meeting note

Project name	Hinkley Point C New Nuclear Power Station Material Change 1
File reference	EN010102
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	25 July 2023
Meeting with	EDF
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
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.

Project Overview

EDF Energy (the Applicant) gave an overview of the main features of its material change application.

- The removal of the need to install an Acoustic Fish Deterrent (AFD),
- The replacement of the Access Control Building with a new Equipment Storage Building.
- An Interim Spent Fuel Store (ISFS) (amending the plot plan to move from wet ISFS to dry ISFS with alterations to building dimensions).
- Changes to Meteorological Mast
- Retention of Hinkley Point Substation
- Addition of Sluice Gate Storage Structures

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA): Compensation Progress

The removal of the Acoustic Fish Deterrent (AFD) system has the potential to give rise to likely significant effects (LSE), triggering the need for a derogation and therefore the Applicant is considering the relevant tests. The Applicant has identified a need to mitigate for migratory and assemblage fish groups. Measures being considered for migratory fish include the Applicant looking at the easement of passages at weirs on the Rivers Severn, Wye and Usk. The Applicant is working with the Statutory Nature Conservation bodies (SNCBs) to identify weirs.

For the assemblage species, the Applicant is investigating improvement and creation of habitats that will support the fish populations, with a focus on saltmarsh, seagrass, kelp forests and oysters. The Applicant has engaged with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust on the saltmarsh as well as Swansea, Newcastle and Portsmouth Universities.

The Applicant explained that compulsory acquisition could be required, and rights of way are likely to be diverted and this includes the England Coast Path. The Applicant is considering whether compensation should be based on the total biomass loss from plant operation and not the smaller losses associated with the AFD removal. The Inspectorate explained that the HRA assessment must be done before the start of the consultation.

Adaptive Monitoring and Management Plan

The concept and framework for monitoring has been shared with the SNCBs and focused on impingement monitoring, habitat creation and migration easement. The details will be developed as a consultative process and will assess the performance and effectiveness of the compensation measures and will look to establish governance arrangements to oversee management plans. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to have a clear idea of how long the monitoring and management plans would be in place for and ensure that this is resourced and secured.

Proposed Consenting Strategy

The Applicant will apply for the consent for the sea grass, kelp forest and the oyster bed through a marine license. The weir removal in England and Saltmarsh would be included within the Development Consent Order (DCO), whereas the weir removal in Wales would be consented under a separate Town and Country Planning Act application. The Applicant noted that the structure of the ES and its coverage needed to consider the works in both planning regimes in line with legislative requirements. The Applicant did not rule out the potential need to s52/s53 access to land applications at this stage.

The Applicant has obtained a Radioactive Substances Permit for the alteration to the Interim Spent Fuel Store and are currently waiting for their Water Discharge Activities permit to be granted. Post meeting note, WDA permit granted on 26 July 2023

Timescales

The Applicant is looking to begin formal pre-application consultation in October 2023, and plans to submit the DCO application to the Inspectorate at the end of Q1 to the start of Q2 2024. The Applicant plans to begin hot functional testing (water abstraction) in September 2026. It was also explained that survey work and land referencing was due to commence shortly. The Applicant was advised to give the Inspectorate advance warning if it needed to trigger s52 or s53 of PA2008 to gain access to land as this process has no statutory timescales.

