

Meeting note

Project name	Rampion 2
File reference	
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	3 February 2023
Meeting with	Rampion Extension Development Limited
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 update- including consultation outcomes

The Applicant gave an update of how the project has progressed following the main statutory consultation in 2021. In the consultation the Applicant included two different substation sites, one on Wineham Lane and the other on Kent Street. The Applicant also undertook consultation for the offshore aspects of the project and the onshore cable route. From these sets of engagement the Applicant has undertaken Expert Topic Groups with key stakeholders.

In respect of the offshore turbine areas, four Design Principles were identified in response to the issues raised in engagement and consultation; the Applicant is confident that these Design Principles have met the requirements in the National Policy Statement through Separation (gap); Separation (foreground); Field of View and Proximity. The Applicant's hope is that fixing the offshore turbine extent allows parties to move onto discussing common ground at an earlier stage to support more effective Examination.

Supplementary consultation in Summer/ Autumn 2022

The Applicant provided an overview of the responses received from the supplementary consultation in October/November 2022. Around 600 people attended the four face-to-face events with further outreach online. Some 400 pieces of feedback were received. Those responses suggested small modifications to the project, with most of the responses focusing on the preferred cable route design and

the environmental and social impacts. The Applicant highlighted that the circa 35km cable route will be buried underground however impacts from the construction and subsequent traffic were a concern to residents.

Update on Engagement from Stakeholders

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that they had undertaken a specific round of Expert Topic Groups with relevant statutory stakeholders to discuss the technical aspects within the target consultation, with updates provided on surveys and baseline collection. The Applicant plans to hold meetings with the onshore Expert Topic Groups in March 2023 to discuss updates on onshore surveys and assessment methodology as well as further environmental discussions with stakeholders outside the Expert Topic Groups. A meeting is proposed with offshore statutory stakeholders prior to the submission of the application to progress discussions on seascape and visual effects and to work towards draft Statements of Common Ground. The Inspectorate asked the Applicant if they had experienced any barriers to engagement, to which it was confirmed that strains on team resourcing at some stakeholders had been an issue.

PINS Consultation Feedback

The Inspectorate informed the Applicant of an increase in emails raising concerns over the Applicant's consultation process, with reference to the residents of Cowfold and West Sussex County Council, which is the proposed location for the onshore substation. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that in addition to four in-person events held for the cable route modification consultation, the Applicant went to a public meeting at Cowfold Village Hall and gave a presentation and answered public questions on the scheme at the invitation of the Parish Council. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant's Consultation Report recognises the event and clearly demonstrates how concerns about the adequacy of the consultation have been addressed and considered.

Compulsory Acquisition Update

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate on the ongoing process of gaining access to land for surveys, which has generally been well responded to. The Applicant has updated these landowners and are continuing consultation for a new onshore cable corridor option within the South Downs National Park. The Applicant confirmed that heads of terms have not presently been issued but where the new corridor route has now been confirmed these discussions can progress.

Update on Onshore Consultation

A new suggested alteration to the onshore corridor route has been proposed, in the vicinity of the central section of the onshore route. The new route would avoid direct environmental effects or risks, including in the vicinity of New Down Local Wildlife Site, and reduce overall impacts or risks relating to commercial interests. These and

other matters arising through engagement and consultation have led to this potential change of route. This alteration will require another round of consultation, which the Applicant intends to target in line with DCLG guidance. Given the nature of the effects of the proposed change and as the community impacted will be local to that section of the route, the Applicant intends to undertake consultation on a non-statutory basis in respect of section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). This consultation will launch at the end of February 2023 and will run for more than the minimum statutory period.

Environment Update

Environmental surveys and baseline data collection has been completed for several years. The offshore surveys are ongoing; summer and winter shipping and navigation and underwater noise surveys have taken place with datasets being reviewed during engagement. The Onshore surveys will align with land access and have good coverage across the PEIR Assessment Boundary that was consulted on in 2021. Further targeted engagement with key stakeholders will also take place. The Inspectorate queried whether there would be any outstanding survey areas coming up to submission; the Applicant explained it was likely that the seasonal protected species surveys may need to run later into the year.

Draft DCO Principles (Applicant)

The DCO application is expected to be submitted in Q2 2023. The Applicant is considering submitting draft documents, for the Inspectorate's review, in March 2023. The Inspectorate advised of a 6-8 week review period, and highlighted the importance of the Applicant submitting a focussed suite of documents, rather than a blanket submission, highlighting specific matters that the Applicant is seeking advice on. The Inspectorate also advised that a well-advanced draft of the Consultation Report is one of those documents that should be submitted for review.