



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	Drax Bioenergy with Carbon Capture and Storage Project (BECCS)
<b>File reference</b>	EN010120
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	30 June 2021
<b>Meeting with</b>	Drax Power Limited
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project Update Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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.

### **Design Update: Removal of jetty and Review of CCS infrastructure locations.**

The Applicant noted they had held discussions with stakeholders about optimum transport solutions. Analysis of the road route options versus the use of the existing Drax Jetty had been completed. The Applicant explained that they would not be utilising the existing Drax Jetty and associated access routes for the transport of Abnormal Indivisible Load (AILs) to the Proposed Development site. The Applicant stated that these elements of the Proposed Development would not be included in the DCO Application. This has removed the requirement for associated road widening. A road option for bringing in infrastructure had been discussed with local authorities, who have been supportive. Minutes from meetings were available to evidence this. It was expected that this would be detailed in any emerging statements of common ground (SoCGs).

The Applicant's engineering teams had been looking to optimise the location of the carbon capture infrastructure. The Applicant stated that the carbon capture infrastructure would be sited within the existing Drax power generation facility, however the precise location had not been determined at this stage. The Applicant had assessed the location of the carbon capture infrastructure and decided a location to the north of the site was preferable to a south end solution. A new, indicative site plan showed the proposed carbon capture infrastructure now based around the northern cooling towers and trainline. The benefit of the northern location was that the northern cooling towers were available for use (as the last remaining coal units were largely not in use) to provide the cooling capacity for the BECCS plant. Use of the northern cooling towers would also minimise the pipe runs, particularly the high pressure carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) pipeline. Another benefit was the re-use of the heat and power turbines from the coal units, which was anticipated to increase plant overall efficiency by 1%. Use of northern

infrastructure would also reduce the likelihood of construction programme interference with the operational biomass units.

The Applicant explained their need to design in flexibility and optionality as part of the DCO application. The Inspectorate requested the Applicant explain and assess proposed options in its application documentation, particularly the Environmental Statement (ES) and work plans. The Applicant advised its assessment of alternatives in the ES would set out its consideration of the options for the location of the carbon capture infrastructure within the site.

An overview of the site was provided, including the main operational Drax power station. The flue gas de-sulphurisation plant was the footprint for where the BECCS infrastructure would be located. An area for temporary construction lay down along with an environmental mitigation area were identified. The Defra Biodiversity Metric would be used to identify the required mitigation action. Improvements to existing coppices and hedgerows were expected. As the project would use largely hardstanding on operational land the Applicant did not anticipate significant loss of habitat.

### **Programme update**

Scoping work had been completed and a scoping opinion had been issued. The remaining programme was:

- Q3 2021 – Fix design concept from engineering pre-FEED studies – to inform the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)
- Q4 2021 – Statutory consultation (over a six-week period)
- Q1 2022 – Design fix process for ES/DCO
- Q2 2022 – Submission of DCO Application
- Q3 2022 – Pre-examination
- Q4 2022/Q1 2023 – Examination
- Q2 & Q3 2023 – Decision-making period
- Q3 2023 – Decision on DCO
- Q4 2023 – Q1 2024 – Certification of documents, discharge of pre-commencement requirements
- Q2 2024 - Begin construction on first BECCS unit

The Applicant anticipated the revised Energy National Policy Statements (NPSs) being published prior to its design fix.

### ***Non statutory consultation***

Non-statutory consultation took place during March 2021. The purpose was to introduce the project to the public, gather early feedback, and raise awareness about the Applicant's carbon-negative ambitions and the BECCS technology. A range of virtual consultation methods were used and briefings were given to local authority stakeholders and the Environmental Agency (EA). In the 36 responses, the key areas of concern and interest were safety (CO<sub>2</sub> escaping), air quality, noise pollution, and the BECCS process.

The Applicant highlighted a letter of opposition received from a national campaign group with international links (Biofuelwatch). The letter raised concerns with sustainability aspects of biomass.

## ***Statutory consultation approach***

Statutory consultation was planned between 1 November and 12 December 2021. An early draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was shared with local authorities for comment. The Applicant planned a blended consultation using virtual and in-person events, dependent on the prevailing Covid-19 government restrictions and conditions. It intended to have manned promotional events in places such as supermarkets. Lessons learned from the non-statutory consultation included the requirement for wider promotion. Further use of social media and stakeholder briefings were planned. Discussions were ongoing with local parish councils building on existing good relationships, and local authorities had requested briefings.

## **Technical stakeholder engagement update**

There was ongoing liaison with Selby District Council (SDC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC). A Planning performance agreement (PPA) was expected to be signed imminently. Engagement with other stakeholders continues, including (but not limited to) Highways England, the EA, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and the Canal and Rivers Trust (CRT).

An overview of key environmental topics for consultation with key stakeholders was provided. Consultation was not expected on the subjects of climate resilience, and materials and waste. Consultation was anticipated to be required, but it was yet to commence for air quality, greenhouse gases and major accidents and natural disasters. Consultation had been undertaken or was underway with local authorities on for ground conditions, ecology, population, health and socio-economics, landscape and visual, transport, historic environment, noise and vibration and water environment. The Applicant had discussed construction transport routes for abnormal indivisible loads, survey locations and assessment methodology for noise and vibration, and key heritage constraints. The Applicant was engaging with the EA, CRT and NYCC as the lead local flood authority on the approach to surface water and the flood risk assessment. It was seeking agreement with SDC and NYCC regarding the methodology for the assessment of land use change in relation to greenhouse gases. The Applicant was also seeking agreement with NYCC/SDC on definitions used in assessments for major accidents and disasters, as highlighted in the Inspectorate's scoping opinion. The Applicant information to Natural England (in February 2021) for consultation and was awaiting a response.

The Inspectorate queried whether the engagement with technical bodies extended to discussions with National Grid and the endurance reserve consortium about the sequencing and timing of consents for the Humber Low Carbon Pipeline project and endurance reserve. The Applicant acknowledged the need to provide signposting to additional information that was available or to direct more detailed queries to the relevant project team. The Inspectorate advised a sufficient level of information would need to be provided during statutory consultation, and information on related projects would potentially be considered during Examination. The Applicant advised it had appointed a Humber Cluster relationship manager to liaise with those project teams.

The Applicant advised that the following surveys had been completed:

- Extended Phase 1 habitat, wintering birds and great crested newt survey.

- Landscape – Day and night-time winter photography at agreed viewpoints.
- Heritage and archaeology – Walkover survey.
- Noise monitoring surveys (unattended and attended) at agreed locations.

## **AOB**

The Inspectorate queried whether the removal of the jetty as a transport option/solution removed any interactions with the Crown Estate. The Applicant confirmed it did and also removed the potential for interaction with some third party landowners. The Applicant noted that the project almost entirely falls within Drax's landholding, and so whilst there may be the need for some compulsory acquisition powers to be sought, these are expected to be limited.

The Applicant confirmed it had considered the use of rail for abnormal loads but there were concerns about the capacity of the infrastructure, and its suitability for the dimensions of the load due to the height of bridges along the rail route. All options would be set out in the Alternatives chapter of the ES.

The Applicant confirmed it had progressed with its consideration of vendors for BECCS equipment and selected Mitsubishi Industries Technology. The supplier would develop design solutions based on the operational behaviour of its solvents.

There was a brief discussion about the recent withdrawal of the Net Zero Teesside (NZE) application and lessons to be learned. The Inspectorate commented that advice to the NZE Applicant will be published shortly.

The next project update meeting would be arranged for two – three month's time.