



Meeting note

Project name	Slough Multifuel Extension Project
File reference	EN010129
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	1 April 2022
Meeting with	SSE Thermal and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP)
Venue	Microsoft Teams Meeting
Meeting objectives	Project Update
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given:

Introduction:

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.

Update on project/ construction

The Applicant provided an update in relation to the construction of the project consented under the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) 1990 (as amended).

Key project updates to the consented scheme and related dates were:

- Main site set up – completed Q1 2021
- Slipform construction of concrete bunker – completed Q3 2021
- Steelworks anticipated to be visible above ground for boiler house and flume treatment plant – Q2 2022
- Turbine and Reactor Installation – Q4 2022
- Commissioning – 2024
- Full handover – Q4 2024

Visuals of construction works of the tipping bays and raised tipping hall were provided. The main transformer would be sited in front of the tipping hall. Construction was ongoing around the bunker area, including the main fire wall and steel works for office pods to house the control room. The external pipe would sit approximately half way up the steel structure. Steel work was being completed on the back of the north waste bunker, including fire proofing, the main lift and stairwell shaft on the north side of the plant. The exit ramp and feed hopper openings were under construction. Groundwork was ongoing, with cooling pipes being finished before being concreted over. Each boiler had a separate fuel hopper using the same material from the bunker where refuse derived fuel was mixed. The ash bunker was fully constructed. Six tipping bays would



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feed into the bunker, high beam installations would create space underneath for a water treatment plant, fire water storage plant and stores. Visibility of the external pipe which would connect the turbine extraction to the pre-heaters was anticipated from Liverpool Road, but the height would be in keeping with other buildings in the area. A data centre and industrial units were nearby. A wrap was proposed around the cooling tower to match the existing colouring and minimise visual impacts.

Update on discussions with Slough Borough Council (SBC) and other consultees

The Applicant met with SBC on 15 February 2022 to discuss the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. It outlined its approach to the application and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which it remained as set out to the Inspectorate in October 2021. It discussed Biodiversity Net Gain and agreed the need for close collaboration for solutions regarding interfaces for planning conditions/ DCO requirements. It was in regular contact with SBC regarding the previously consenting planning applications and the discharge of conditions for various works on site.

The Applicant had met with the owners of the industrial trading estate (SEGRO) and the Local Liaison Group (which included the Local Planning Authority and Slough Borough Council) in January 2022 and had since provided updates. It highlighted elements of the design which were included at SEGRO's request. It had formally consulted with SBC's transport team but had not received a response to date. It had also sought to engage with SBC's ecology/ biodiversity teams but had received no comment at this stage. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) had been discussed between the parties but was not deemed as necessary at this stage. The Applicant would continue to monitor for any resourcing concerns.

Update on Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)/ Statutory Consultation

Stage 1 non-statutory consultation was completed in 2021. Stage 2 statutory consultation would be completed in line with the SoCC. The Applicant had previously shared the SoCC with SBC on an informal basis, with formal consultation at the end of February 2022. The SoCC had also been shared with SEGRO. SBC responded with no comments on the content. The SoCC had been published on the project website and in the Slough Observer. The s46 notification to the Inspectorate and consultation materials were being prepared for the formal launch of statutory consultation in early May 2022. The Applicant was looking to meet with the Local Liaison Group shortly after launch. A newsletter would be issued to the consultation area defined in the SoCC. A range of methods would be used, including face to face events, webinars and smart surveys. A full virtual consultation room was expected and the Applicant was prepared to revert physical sessions to virtual should Covid-19 guidance change. The Inspectorate advised to report on visitors to the virtual consultation room within the consultation report.

Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) / EIA update

The Applicant advised of an updated and refined red line boundary (2.81 hectares) since the scoping report. It had been extended across Edinburgh Avenue to capture pipes, drainage and electrical cabling relating to cooling water. Modifications to the red line boundary around Cooling Tower 8 now included an inset that excludes the steam to hot water calorifer house and an inset around the Cooling Tower 7 cooling water pond.



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Modifications excluded the package boiler area which was still an operating asset of Slough Heat and Power, providing back up heat and power for the trading estate. It also included an operational boiler which was due to be decommissioned in the next five years. The operational plant sat to the north of the red boundary.

The Inspectorate advised that a clear and distinctive narrative should be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) and PEIR regarding the evolution of design and changes to the red line boundary.

Survey gaps/ limitations

Diffusion monitoring surveys were ongoing, and the PEIR would contain the first month of findings. The remaining two months of surveys were not expected to affect the initial findings. The Applicant was proceeding on the basis of the plans presented to SBC transport team, it did not anticipate any gaps.

Approach to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The Applicant was considering the achievability of BNG in the context of the project and area on site, which would make on-site BNG challenging. Financial contributions had previously been made to the area, including Burnham Beeches. The Applicant had consulted guidance and was aware BNG was not always achievable, BNG calculations were made on ground level structures, but this structure would be above ground. The Inspectorate advised that BNG was not a current legal requirement for National Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) but is anticipated in 2025. It advised the Applicant should as a minimum ensure BNG meet the applicable legal requirements at the point of application, as this would be tested during acceptance. The Applicant should also make a clear distinction in the application documentation between mitigation and enhancement measures. All relevant conversations should be captured within the ES and PEIR.

Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA)

At the time of scoping there was no evidence that air pollution would not increase, to allow the Inspectorate to agree to scope out this topic. However, the since completed air quality modelling demonstrated no net change from the consented development. The Applicant proposed to set out in the PEIR that human health should be scoped out and cover this within the chapter text. A HHRA for air quality was not proposed as an appendix. The Applicant queried the Inspectorate's view of this proposal. The Inspectorate advised it would confirm its position after the meeting and understood why the evidence was not present in the scoping report as it is common for changes and updates to occur following the adoption of a scoping opinion. The Applicant advised that the Operational Noise chapter of the ES would confirm there would not be an increase, therefore there would be no assessment.

Post Meeting note:

Table 15.1 of the Scoping Report (November 2021) stated that the HHRA submitted for the consented scheme (and appended to the ES) remains valid in support of the proposed DCO scheme. This was based on the assumption that the air quality modelling of stack emissions was expected to show no change or a benefit compared with the consented scheme (due to lower emission limits being introduced in 2019 as set out in paragraph 8.5.5).



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The Scoping Opinion (December 2021) states at ID 3.2.3 *"the Proposed Development involves the use of new technology and there are a number of sensitive human receptors within the vicinity of the scheme, the Inspectorate does not agree to scope this matter out at this stage. The ES should clarify whether the changes to the consented scheme resulting from the Proposed Development will alter the characteristics of the effects or present different risks to human health."*

Although the EIA Regulations require the ES to be based on the most recent Scoping Opinion, paragraph 1.1.4 of the Opinion states that this should not prevent the Applicant from subsequently further refining the scope of aspects / matters, where further evidence can justify that approach. To this end, the Inspectorate understands that the updated air quality modelling data for the DCO application and conclusions are to be provided within the ES, and that these can be drawn on as evidence in justifying why the HHRA for the consented scheme remains valid. The Applicant should determine how this information is presented within the ES. ID 2.3.4 of the Scoping Opinion recommends the original ES and associated ES addendums for the consented development are appended to the DCO application.

DCO Programme

From June to September 2022 the Applicant would be reviewing consultation responses, updating the PEIR and preparing the EIA and Application documentation. It intended to submit the DCO application in late September/ early October 2022. It expected to request a focused draft document review, which would be discussed at the next project update meeting. The Inspectorate advised to ensure SBC were kept informed of the inter-relationship between planning conditions and the DCO prior to submission. It anticipated that SBC's position on how conditions/ requirements would be enforced would be a key issue for Examination.

Update from the Inspectorate

The Inspectorate advised of changes to the case team.

[Advice Note 6](#) and [Advice Note 8.4](#) had been updated to clarify the use of hyperlinks and USB's, the latter of which could no longer be accepted.

The provision of confidential information within a report (such as badger reports) should be retained in an annexe rather than the body of the report. This would allow the report to be published, with the annex redacted.

The Applicant should consider venues and audio visual companies able to support blended events, in case these were required.