



## Meeting Note

<b>File reference</b>	<b>EN020001 - Hinkley to Seabank Connection</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>FINAL</b>
<b>Author</b>	<b>Robert Ranger</b>

<b>Meeting with</b>	<b>National Grid</b>
<b>Meeting date</b>	<b>20 June 2012</b>
<b>Attendees (Planning Inspectorate)</b>	<b>Kath Haddrell</b> (Senior Case Manager) <b>Robert Ranger</b> (Case Officer) <b>Jan Bessell</b> (Pre Application Inspector)
<b>Attendees (non Planning Inspectorate)</b>	<b>Peter Bryant</b> (Senior Project Manger, National Grid) <b>Nikki Suri</b> (Lead Project Manager, National Grid) <b>Richard Walsh</b> (Senior Consents Officer, National Grid) <b>Ivan Stone</b> (Project Communications Consultant, National Grid)
<b>Location</b>	Planning Inspectorate Offices, Temple Quay House

<b>Meeting purpose</b>	Project update and practical preparations for the submission of the application
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<b>Summary of key points discussed and advice given</b>	<p><b>Introductions</b></p> <p><b>The Planning Inspectorate (PINS)</b> advised on its openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the National Infrastructure Portal website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 as amended (the act) and also to note that any advice given under s.51 does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.</p> <p><b>PINS</b> explained that Jan Bessell has been appointed as pre-application Inspector, to support the case team, and explained that she will not be the Inspector who ultimately will examine or make a recommendation on the application.</p> <p><b>National Grid (NG)</b> Shared that their Summer Engagement Program was underway, that Community Forums continued to be held and that survey work relating to the project (including making arrangements for access to land) was ongoing. Together, National Grid and Western Power Distribution (WPD) were consulting on related works to reconfigure the distribution network in North Somerset (as a consequence of NG's preferred route corridor), and work was being undertaken on identifying correct processes for preparing the draft DCO and application documentation.</p> <p><b>NG</b> noted that they had observed the approach of other applicants to the production of the DCO submission, which</p>
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had involved large amounts of work in a short period of time. In order to make sure that their approach is well-planned, Nikki Suri has been appointed as the DCO Manager for the project.

**PINS** Agreed that preparing a DCO application was a significant task and would benefit from forethought. Advised that some tools, such as the Electronic Document Index and the advice contained in Advice Note 6, exist to inform this process.

Advice can be provided by PINS on practical matters such as document formatting and electronic structuring of submissions so that there is maximum compatibility with the PINS casework management system and website. Experience to date is that the vast majority of members of the public and professional participants to examinations make use of electronic copies of the documents via the website rather than printed and bound physical copies, and that it is important that both are legible and properly prepared.

**NG** Explained that they were also in discussion with internal colleagues working on other projects to ensure a consistent approach to document production. Suggested that meeting between PINS and NG technical staff could be valuable.

**PINS** Agreed that such a meeting would in principle be valuable.

**NG** Shared that there are several DCO applications being prepared within NG; including they expect to submit the North London Reinforcement project before August.

### **Project Update**

**NG** Described work that was being undertaken to facilitate the removal of the existing WPD 132kV line, which will impact the WPD distribution system; particularly around Weston Super Mare. Those impacts will need to be addressed. NG and WPD are working closely together on their proposals and consultation approaches. In this way they hope to avoid confusing or fatiguing the public with multiple schemes

A consultation has been and is being undertaken on substation siting. A substation siting study has been published.

3 Elected Member briefings have been held along the proposed route, alongside public exhibitions. Comments are sought until 3 July 2012. NG also met the leader of North Somerset Council, and they welcomed the relationship the local authority, which has become stronger during the course of forming the proposal.

Protected Species surveys have begun, and the vast majority of agreements to enable the necessary access to land have been secured through discussions with landowners. On 5 occasions it has been necessary to use statutory powers to enter land to conduct the surveys; NG considers this a last resort and will avoid it wherever they can.<sup>1</sup>

**PINS** Noted that there had been a reduction in the amount of pre-application correspondence that had been sent or copied to PINS on this issue. Powers exist under s52 and s53 of the 2008 Act (as amended) (PA 2008) to prevent access to land being used to unreasonably obstruct proposals.

**NG** Expressed their belief much of the confusion expressed by some local residents regarding the requirements for survey access over land had now dissipated. Many landowners had been spoken to by NG and its agents which seems to have reassured them. NG noted that the powers in s53 of the PA 2008 exist; asked how long an application for authorisation to enter land under s53 normally takes.

**PINS** Advised that there was no fixed timetable for such an application; affected landowners would be given an opportunity to respond to any request for powers to enter their land. Any such application must be a last resort; the more discussion with the landowner that can be demonstrated when an application for authorisation is made, the more swiftly the application is likely to progress.

The Localism Act has clarified that power of access can be sought to conduct environmental surveys.

**NG** Anticipate that they will consider the outcomes of their summer engagement during the late summer. Formal s42 consultation is expected in summer next year, with the application being submitted early 2014.

**PINS** Asked NG to consider the impact of the holiday season on consultees, given that the deadlines set out in the PA 2008 are in calendar days.

**PINS** Asked if the required 400/132kV substation and 132kV connection proposed for North Somerset was to be included in the DCO application as associated development.

**NG** Confirmed that this was their intention, and sought advice on the correct approach.

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<sup>1</sup> NG did not seek the power to enter land under section 53 of the Planning Act 2008, but rather used other powers under other legislation which were available to NG as a transmission network operator. As a result, PINS was not involved.

**PINS** Could not advise on whether or not an element of the scheme is or is not associated development at this stage. This is a matter NG should take their own advice on and refer to the legislation and published guidance.

**NG** Explained that the Thematic Groups that are being held as part of the consultation process are ongoing, and were brought together in May for an update on progress. There had been a mistaken perception amongst some members of the public that the Thematic Groups were being given access to information that was not being shared more widely. This is not the case and the information had been presented to members of the Local Community Forum

Viewpoint maps have been produced by NG and have been fed into by both community forums and thematic groups. A conservative approach to assessing impact was taken, including almost all those viewpoints that were identified.

These maps were used in public workshops to identify further key views and also to capture feedback on other issues. Feedback has been categorised into 14 subject areas, ranging from landscape to socio-economic impacts such as house prices.

**PINS** Advised that the concept of "material issues" as used in Town and Country Planning applications does not automatically apply to the PA 2008 which deals with amongst other prescribed matters, important and relevant matters.

**NG** Confirmed that they were aware that any important and relevant matter would be considered. Their consultation has taken in over 40,000 addresses at this stage, with community forums both guiding the consultation approach and helping to verify whether or not it is proving effective. All comments are useful in helping to inform and shape the proposal. NG are very positive about the value and contribution made by consultation to the project overall.

**PINS** Advised that parties sometimes view the outcomes of a process differently, and it is important to understand how other participants to the consultation process feel about its outcomes.

**NG** Agreed that this was important, and explained that they had enjoyed robust discussions on consultation methods with elected representatives and particularly at the community forums. The Strategic Form continues to be chaired by Leonora Rozee, whilst the Local Forums are now being chaired by Marion Barber.

#### **Preparations for submission**

**NG** Explained that they were keen to resolve any practical

and logistical issues that might arise if an application is accepted, so that any examination proceeds as smoothly as possible. With that in mind, they asked if PINS could advise on venue specification and locations for hearing that might be held, so that suitable venues could be booked.

**PINS** Explained that venues are supplied by the applicant, to the specification of the Examining authority. It is for the Examining authority appointed to examine the application that will determine how the application is to be examined and this cannot be pre-determined by any other party. In general terms the timetable for any examination will depend upon submissions made at the preliminary meeting, and therefore it is not possible to predict in advance when venues will be required. The size and geographical location of venues will be dependant upon the number and geographical distribution of representations received, and the final form of the scheme and as set out above the Examining authority.

**NG** Asked if PINS had a view on how the application and key documents such as the Environmental Statement could be broken up to reflect the differing environments along the liner scheme.

**PINS** Could not be prescriptive, but advised that this is a matter that could be informed by consultation with local authorities and other parties.

**NG** Asked how contact between the applicant and any Examining authority that will be appointed would be handled.

**PINS** Explained that the Examining authority will not engage with any party to an examination, including the applicant, outside of the examination process. Written submissions can be made to the Examining authority, along with oral submissions at meetings and hearings. PINS will continue to assign officers to administer and support the process and, since those officers are not involved in considering the merits of the proposal, they can provide advice and guidance to the applicant and others on applying for and making representations about an application. Any advice given by PINS, before or after submission of an application, will be published.

**NG** Asked if any site visits would be held in an examination.

**PINS** Confirmed that once again this is a matter for the Examining authority. The two types of site inspection provided for are unaccompanied and accompanied. If access to private land is required then it is likely to require an accompanied site visit.

**NG** Noted that the process would be inquisitorial, and asked if the Examining authority's questions would be across the

	<p>length of the examination or at fixed points.</p> <p><b>PINS</b> Advised that this was a matter for the Examining authority, having regard to the submissions made at the preliminary meeting; but the established custom was that questions were asked in rounds, with deadlines for responses as provided for in the Infrastructure (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010 (EPR). PINS advised that it was important that NG ensure they are familiar with the EPR if an application is to be submitted.</p> <p><b>PINS</b> Advised that changes introduced by the Localism Act altered the way statutory consultees were treated at examination. Rather than statutory consultees being automatically considered to be interested parties. This may differ from advice that NG has been giving to statutory parties during their consultation exercise to date, and PINS asks that they be aware of this change.</p>
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<b>Specific decisions/ follow up required?</b>	<b>NG</b> and <b>PINS</b> to arrange a meeting between technical staff to discuss document presentation and electronic formatting.
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<b>Circulation List</b>	