

Meeting Note

Status	FINAL
Author	Robert Ranger

Project Name	Hinkley to Seabank Connection
Project Reference	EN020001

Meeting with	National Grid
Meeting date	31 March 2011
Attendees (IPC)	Mark Wilson (Case Leader) Rob Ranger (Case Officer) Jan Bessell (Pre Application Commissioner)
Attendees (non IPC)	Peter Bryant (Senior Project Manager, National Grid) Ivan Stone (3G Communications) Nikki Suri (National Grid) Richard Walsh (National Grid)
Location	IPC Offices, Temple Quay House

Meeting purpose	Meeting between National Grid and their professional team and the IPC to provide an update on consultation and project progress.
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Summary of outcomes	<p>IPC advised on its openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the IPC's website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 (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>IPC also advised that the role of the pre-application Commissioner was to provide input and expertise to advise an applicant and others in applying for an order granting development consent or making representations about an application. A Commissioner giving advice on an application or proposed application may not be appointed to examine, make recommendations on or decide that application.</p> <p>NG Is keen to update the IPC on their continued pre-application engagement with stakeholders. Recently, NG has been in discussions with diverse bodies, such as North Somerset Council, local Rotary Clubs, and the</p>
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Hinkley C Connection Group which is made up of representatives from local authorities and others.

NG The Hinkley C Connection Group (HCCG) were given a tour of the NG National Control Centre in Wokingham, which was felt to be a valuable educational experience and helped to communicate that NG are a network operator rather than simply a connection developer.

IPC Notes that they have been invited to attend meetings of the HCCG as observers. Have no general objections to observing meetings, so long as the IPC's impartiality, (and the perception of that impartiality,) is protected and maintained.

NG Parish Councils are also represented on the HCCG, having appointed a joint representative. This input is helpful and constructive, and NG welcome the Parish Councils involvement.

NG feels that they are developing the ability to communicate "what NG are" to a greater degree. The skills required to undertake effective consultation are becoming stronger in the organisation.

NG Enquired as to the current status of the IPC workload.

IPC Two applications are currently under consideration, a third having been submitted but failing to be accepted for examination. The latter of the two accepted applications, for an energy-from-waste generating station, has just concluded the registration period and has generated in excess of 10,000 relevant representations, which will have implications on venue provision and other practical matters.

NG Who is responsible for providing the venue?

IPC The developer is responsible for providing the venue. Every Interested Party is entitled to attend.

The IPC has published a Welsh Language Scheme to help determine how to make provision for specific cases.

The IPC has Welsh-speaking officers, and Welsh speaking Commissioners. Several of our commissioners were jointly appointed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

NG Mentioned another current project being undertaken in Mid Wales and remarked that they were pleased by the level of assistance they have received from local authorities in Wales on determining the appropriate level of

provision.

Use of the Welsh language is also an effective way of engaging with younger people, since a significant investment has been made in teaching Welsh in recent years.

Language generally is one of several areas where NG is working with local authorities to identify hard to reach groups.

NG (returning to the Hinkley C Connection project) gave a presentation on their consultation methodology and progress to date. A copy of that presentation can be found here: http://infrastructure.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/110331_EN020001_NG-presentation.pdf

IPC How will the delay to the IET/KEMA report affect the consultation that National Grid is undertaking on their approach to undergrounding?

NG The intention is that the consultation on our approach to undergrounding will remain open for a month after the IET/KEMA report is published.

IPC Notes that people have been added to consultation mailing list at later stages, having engaged with the consultation at an earlier stage. Has any analysis been done of common factors between these people, particularly geographical factors?

NG Respondents show a wide geographical distribution. .

IPC Has NG sought to agree analysis methodology with other bodies?

NG Are not aware of any specific discussions, but consider openness and transparency to be key objectives of the analysis process.

IPC Has any change to the nature of responses over the course of the consultation been seen?

NG Representations are becoming more focused and better informed. There has also been a significant campaign element introduced; for example, a postcard campaign by the "Save our Valley" group.

NG Planning to publish a "feedback report" with some provisional results from the consultation to date.

IPC Issues have been raised regarding the approach to environmental issues in the Strategic Optioneering Report.

NG Environmental issues are considered when considering strategic options and this will be reported clearly and effectively.

IPC Will the Preferred Connection Report have regard to the IET/KEMA report and the new undergrounding approach?

NG Due regard will be had to them, but NG does not control the timetable for the production of the KEMA report.

IPC Will consideration of undergrounding be limited to the route corridor options already proposed?

NG Yes. NG has had constructive discussions with local authorities and other statutory consultees on the appropriate landscapes within the route corridors that would derive most benefit from undergrounding. This was undertaken without prejudice by any parties to the current ongoing review of strategic options. These discussions will be reflected in the Preferred Connection report.

If any consideration needs to be given to undergrounding elements of the connection (along with any other along with other mitigating techniques and technologies) then discussions will be held with statutory consultees and the public.

NG North Somerset Council considers that entering into a Planning Performance Agreement may compromise their independence. However, NG is confident that it would not and have found it a useful project management tool where it has been employed.

NG The initial Community Forums have been productive, thanks to an increased sense of ownership of the forums by their members. The assistance of officers from local authorities and of the Planning Aid supplied independent chair has been invaluable.

IPC Has the 2008 Act process been raised by respondents in the consultation exercise?

NG Yes. There appears to be a lack of clarity locally on the practicalities of the 2008 Act process and the role of the IPC. IPC may wish to consider holding outreach events. NG invited IPC to attend and participate in events held as part of the consultation exercise.

	<p>IPC Will give serious consideration to bringing forward some IPC outreach activities in the areas of the preferred route corridor when it is announced. Given the ongoing community activity surrounding this application it may be a better use of resources if the IPC were to be invited to one of the regular meetings or another event to answer questions and explain the process, rather than holding a series of separate outreach events. Happy to consider attending NG events as an agenda item on a case by case basis, but the need to preserve the IPCs impartiality makes holding joint events impossible.</p> <p>NG Currently estimate submission of an application in 2013.</p> <p>IPC Does NG have an estimate of when a scoping request will be made? IPC would appreciate as much advance notice of the submission of a request for a Scoping Opinion as is practical.</p> <p>NG Will provide ongoing updates as progress towards a scoping request is made. Thematic Groups, held with statutory consultees and others, are working to form a methodology prior to formal scoping.</p> <p>IPC Land rights issues. Incorporating Compulsory Acquisition clauses into Development Consent Orders is possible but requires carefully prepared documents. Similarly, the IPC is producing new guidance on S52 and S53 applications for compulsory information on and entry onto land.</p> <p>NG Is very aware of the complexity of Compulsory Acquisition and land rights. In addition to the legal prerequisites and thresholds prior to applications, NG feels it has a corporate responsibility to seek such powers with great care, and only when absolutely necessary.</p>
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Specific decisions/follow up required?	<p>IPC notes revised submission date.</p> <p>NG will continue to update IPC on progress towards a scoping request.</p> <p>NG to consider inviting IPC to attend a community event / meeting. To let IPC know which meetings would be appropriate.</p> <p>IPC to consider attending HCCG meetings as an observer.</p>
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Circulation List	Attendees
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	Peter Bond