



Meeting note

File reference	EN020001 Hinkley Point C Connection
Status	Final
Author	Steffan Jones
Date	28 August 2013
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	Conference Room 2, 2 Rivergate, Bristol
Attendees	Chris White – Case Manager, The Planning Inspectorate Jolyon Wootton – Case Officer, The Planning Inspectorate Steffan Jones – Case Officer, The Planning Inspectorate Jan Bessell – Examining Inspector, The Planning Inspectorate Frances Russell – EIA Manager, The Planning Inspectorate Helen Lancaster – Senior EIA Advisor, The Planning Inspectorate Nicola Mathiason – Lawyer, The Planning Inspectorate Aileen Smith – Consents Officer, National Grid Edward Purnell – Consents Officer, National Grid Ivan Stone – Copper Consultancy
Meeting objectives	National Grid to update the Planning Inspectorate on the Hinkley Point C Connection prior to the start of the Section 42 consultation.
Circulation	All

National Grid were made aware of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy (that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate's website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008, as amended by the Localism Act 2011 (PA 2008)). Any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Activities and information on s42 consultation

National Grid gave a PowerPoint [presentation](#) on the proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and their pre-application consultation undertaken to date.

Following 3 years of non-statutory consultation, from 3 September 2013 to the 29 September National Grid will be undertaking the statutory stage of their consultation in accordance with sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA 2008. National Grid is expected to submit a Section 46 notification to the Planning Inspectorate on or before doing so in

compliance with the PA 2008. National Grid has allowed in excess of the statutory 28 days to consult the LAs on their draft SoCC, to afford additional time for the LAs to take soundings from Parish Councils.

The statutory consultation period with Section 42 and 47 prescribed persons will be on the draft proposal including the draft 400kV overhead line route alignment, associated underground cables and substations together with work on the local Weston Power distribution network presented by National Grid.

The use of 'pop-up' information hubs would continue to be used by National Grid during the statutory consultation period, allowing persons to access a range of information about the scheme during opening hours. Their website would also be continuously updated, National Grid commented. Understanding of the technical information to date had been achieved through the use of Thematic Groups and Community Forums, allowing Local Authority Technical specialists and various community groups to exchange views with National Grid. Some communities have engaged in the process more than others, such as Nailsea Town Council and Mark Parish Council, though National Grid said that they were attempting to further engage communities in Avonmouth and along the northern route. From feedback received, National Grid reported strong interest in the proposal from the commercial sectors.

The Planning Inspectorate enquired about the accessibility of documents, and how easy it is for persons to navigate studies and reports. National Grid explained that a navigation document is to be shortly posted online to enable this. Answering whether there are any outstanding requests for information, National Grid confirmed that there are none at this time. National Grid also reported that they had used consultants to evaluate the extent to which the technical information could prohibit engagement. In this regard the Thematic Groups had helped facilitate feedback from various groups on technical matters. The wording of the feedback forms had also been constructed to allow emotional as well as technical responses to the scheme.

The Planning Inspectorate enquired about outstanding matters regarding the route at Portishead. National Grid answered that the Portbury route was their preferred option but this and the alternative Portishead option had been put forward for consultation to allow communities to give their feedback.

PEIR – update on EIA since receiving Scoping Opinion

National Grid commented that where there remained uncertainty e.g foundation type then the environmental surveys and assessments within the Environmental Statement (ES) to cover worst case scenarios.

National Grid updated the Planning Inspectorate on its response to the issues raised in the EIA scoping opinion. It highlighted that some of the information requested would be only available in the final ES as would be the case on all applications. The PEIR is after all only a preliminary document as suggested by its title. It was noted that their ES is not yet written and as a result not yet available, but that information gathered to date was reported within the PEIR. In response, the Planning Inspectorate reminded National Grid to clearly identify information e.g ongoing environmental surveys which will be provided as part of the ES and not the PEIR.

The Planning Inspectorate advised, for the consultation material and the documents submitted at acceptance, that hyperlinks should be included to allow cross-referencing. The ES should also contain an overall contents page.

Draft DCO

National Grid said that the Hinkley Point C Connection draft DCO proposal is independent of the Hinkley Point C New Nuclear Power Station DCO and is not dependent on the latter's consent.

National Grid presented to the Planning Inspectorate their proposed development in stages. These details can be viewed on National Grid's PowerPoint Presentation (slides 11 – 15). The proposed development includes the undergrounding and removal of existing low voltage electricity connection lines as well as the construction of new overhead lines and the construction of substations. Associated development, including construction compound sites, would be included within the draft DCO.

National Grid commented that, for the Section 42 consultation, over 600 plans have been drafted to compliment their draft DCO and Explanatory Memorandum, to be made available during consultation. A newsletter includes a location map illustrating the route corridors and locations of the different pylon designs proposed. For T-ylon foundations, a raft or pile foundation will be employed depending on outcome of engineering surveys. The Planning Inspectorate reminded National Grid of the need to assess the appropriateness of Compulsory Acquisition for all types of pylons proposed and to assess the worst-case scenarios.

The Planning Inspectorate advised the applicant that it may be appropriate to factor-in 'flexibility' into their draft DCO to ensure options can be consented and to avoid a 'material change' being made post-acceptance.

The Planning Inspectorate reminded National Grid to address the National Policy Statements (NPS) in addition to PA 2008 in their draft DCO. On the issue of design under the NPS, National Grid have applied and justified design principles in regard to Pylons along the route corridors (functionality and aesthetics) and associated landscaping, but had not seen the proposal as enabling large-scale design experimentation in totality. The Planning Inspectorate advised that any 'design' needs to be integral to the overall scheme and clearly signposted in the draft DCO.

The draft DCO should also clearly define what works are classed as 'associated development' and what works are 'ancillary' to the proposal. Regard to DCLG statutory guidance on associated development should be given. The draft DCO should also set out mitigation from the Environmental Statement (ES), and ensure the two documents are not written in isolation.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

National Grid said that they have conducted meetings on the draft HRA with Natural England (NE); the Planning Inspectorate advised National Grid to look at Advice Note 10 and not to refer to 'shadow HRA'. The Planning Inspectorate reminded National Grid of the importance to agree the methodology with NE, in letter form if needed in the absence of a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) as it is important to be ready to issue a SoCG as one maybe requested before the Preliminary Meeting. National Grid were also advised that it is also good practice to consult Natural Resources Wales, if not already done so, along with engaging Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and Environment Agency on other consents. National Grid understood this, and commented that there were no identified issues with Bats at this time.

Work with Local Authorities

The Planning Inspectorate questioned whether the LAs had commented on the consultation zones and how these had differed from the original route corridor options. National Grid said that the LAs had not disagreed with the extent of the zones and that the size of the original consultation areas had not reduced since the consultation on route corridor options in 2009 and had increased slightly in response to LPA comments.

National Grid said that they have worked closely with LAs on the consultation zones and in acquiring information about hard to reach communities. From this information, local colleges had been identified as sensitive receptors needing to be further consulted.

National Grid said that the Preliminary Environmental Information would be available in compliance with the SoCC. The Planning Inspectorate had noticed reference to the ES in National Grid's previous consultation material. National Grid confirmed that the ES would be available at the time of their application in 2014. Reference would be made in the PEIR to additional information which is not yet available but will be contained in the ES.

Other Consents

The Planning Inspectorate requested National Grid to continue to hold negotiations with statutory undertakers, especially Network Rail, to remove disagreements over DCO provisions that may adversely affect their operations or land interests. The Planning Inspectorate further advised that the Land Plans should clearly denote Crown land and special category land, making sure all plots and their associated interests are easily cross-referenced. It is further advisable to screen for Crown bodies, such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD), in addition to the Crown Estate.

In answer to the Planning Inspectorate, National Grid said that the Environment Agency and other conservation statutory groups were being consulted on a continuous basis using the Scoping Opinion as reference for keeping particular groups in communication. Further work with transport and traffic groups was also being evaluated. From the Landscape Thematic group and LA consultation, photomontages have been produced to show views with both the Lattice and T-pylon.

The Planning Inspectorate asked whether Ofgem's funding for undergrounding cables had been raised as an issue in the Thematic Groups. National Grid said that statutory bodies had raised this issue but that there was a good understanding that the types of development Ofgem's funding refers to are existing assets in designated landscapes.

AOB

National Grid reported local interest in the Planning Inspectorate holding outreach events to explain how people can register for the examination should the application be successfully 'accepted'. National Grid would send the Planning Inspectorate information on the particular groups and areas.

Finally, the Planning Inspectorate further advised that the consultation report should refer to the 'statutory' and 'non-statutory' stages of the consultation process rather than using the generic terms 'formal' and 'informal'. National Grid had already anticipated this advice and was using the terms 'pre-statutory' and 'statutory'.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

National Grid is expected to submit a Section 46 notification to the Planning Inspectorate on or before commencing their statutory consultation, in compliance with the Planning Act 2008.

The application is expected to be submitted the Planning Inspectorate in early 2014.