

05 FEB 2014



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Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date:

EN020001

04 February 2014

Dear Doctor Fox,

Application for Development Consent by National Grid for the Hinkley Point C Connection

Thank you for your letter received 23 January regarding the above application for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

National Grid has indicated to us that this application is anticipated to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in April 2014. Once the application is submitted PINS then has a statutory period of 28 days in which to decide whether or not to accept the application for examination.

The "criteria" used to determine whether an application is of a suitable standard to be examined are set out in section 55 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended, "the Act"). In order to clearly check whether legal tests have been met PINS use a checklist based on the requirements of that section of the Act. Once the decision is made the "s.55 checklist" is published on the relevant project webpage of the National Infrastructure Planning Portal so that everyone can see how the decision was reached in an open and transparent way.

The decision about whether or not to accept the application is similar to the process that would be undertaken by a local planning authority when deciding whether or not to validate a planning application. PINS will check that the required application documents have been submitted and that the plans submitted are accurate. They will also check to make sure that all of the statutory consultees, which are prescribed in secondary legislation, have been consulted. These include various statutory nature conservation bodies, relevant local authorities and others.

Section 49 of the Act places a duty on the applicant to have regard to any relevant responses that have been made to them during the course of their statutory pre-application consultation. PINS will check that evidence has been submitted in the Consultation Report (a required application document) about how they have met this

duty. In addition, when the application is first submitted to PINS a letter will be sent to all the relevant local authorities requesting that they submit an adequacy of consultation statement. Essentially we are asking the local authorities to confirm whether or not the applicant has complied with; their duty to consult with statutory consultees, local authorities and persons with an interest in the land; their duty to publicise the proposed application; and their duty to consult with people living in the vicinity of the land, through their Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). Every applicant must prepare a SoCC and consult the relevant local authorities about their consultation approach before they commence their community pre-application consultation.

In the course of the Hinkley Point C Connection project pre-application consultation we have provided advice to the applicant on numerous occasions. We are required to publish that advice and you can read it by visiting our Hinkley Point C Connection project page here:

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/projects/south-west/hinkley-point-c-connection/>

As you will read we have been aware of the level of local interest in this application for some time, dating back to 2010. While the onus is very much on the applicant to get their pre-application consultation right, you will see that we have been proactive in advising the local communities affected, and the applicant, about the pre-application stage and application process more generally. We also held a community outreach event in May 2010 in Bridgwater where members of the public were able to put questions to both the applicant and PINS officers.

I hope this answers your query satisfactorily. Please don't hesitate to contact me again if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely



Sir Michael Pitt
Chief Executive