

IPC Infrastructure Planning Commission

Meeting Notes

Date	12 TH October 2011
Status	FINAL
Author	Rachel Henson

Meeting with	National Grid (NG)
Meeting date	12 October 2011
Attendees (IPC)	Kath Haddrell (Senior Case Officer) Rachel Henson (Case Administrator) Jan Bessell (Pre-Application Commissioner)
Attendees (non IPC)	Peter Bryant (National Grid) Richard Walsh (National Grid) Ivan Stone (3g Communications) Aileen Smith (National Grid)
Location	IPC Offices, Bristol.

Meeting purpose	National Grid wished to update the IPC on arrangements for their upcoming announcement on the proposed Hinkley Point C Connection scheme
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Summary of Key Points discussed and advice given	<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 confirmed they announced the preferred Route Corridor on 29th September.</p> <p>NG confirmed that many stakeholders, including statutory consultees were interested in the outcome of the IET Report into the comparative costings of transmission connection technologies.</p>
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NG stated that it had also held a national consultation on its approach to undergrounding high voltage transmission lines. Feedback from this consultation resulted in a new approach to the design and routing of new electricity transmission lines. This was published in September just before the Hinkley announcement and will be a key document when engaging with statutory stakeholders and the general public. NG have committed to explaining this new approach in detail with the local authorities, particularly with regard to the identification and assessment of 'sensitive landscapes'.

NG confirmed that its preferred connection option is an overhead line but would now be looking in detail at mitigation options such as landscaping, alternative pylon design, rationalisation of the lower voltage network or areas where undergrounding may be appropriate.

NG are conscious of the need not to blur the message that they have made a preferred corridor announcement but also want to reassure all stakeholders that they will continue to keep an 'open mind'. National Grid would review and back-check decisions in light of emerging guidance and policies, new technological advances and costs. This will be an on-going part of the project process.

NG confirmed that as part of the announcement they had held media interviews, issued press releases, briefed the local MPs and held two briefings sessions which were well attended by local authority members, officers and representatives from statutory consultees. These were being followed up with further briefings to Local Authority Members and Parish Councils, and the Community Forum programme.

IPC advised that the Consultation Report, required under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008), must take into account what **NG** have done throughout, and that the Consultation Report should show the whole journey, and must read true to those parties who are viewing it critically.

NG advised that Documentation put together by **NG** has been made available to 38,000 people and 8,000 responses have been directly made as a result of this.

IPC confirmed that LA's are requested to respond on the adequacy of the consultation report which applicants must submit with their application, and that this is one of the key documents looked at by the Acceptance Commissioner.

NG confirmed they have and will continue to consult and

engage with LAs and felt that this was the most practical approach to the process of working with LA's.

NG suggested that a joint meeting with the IPC, the relevant Local Authorities and NG would be beneficial. The idea had been suggested by the LAs at recent meetings with NG to help explain IPC process and the requirements of the PA2008 on LA's, for example, ensuring that LAs have the right processes in place to be able to submit adequacy of consultation reports within the strict IPC timetable etc. Due to Jan Bessell's prior commitments, 3rd week of November is most suitable although other dates are now also available if an independent Commissioner Chair is required

IPC The Consultation report should reflect the representations NG have received, IPC may request at acceptance stage a copy of the original representations in accordance with Reg 5 (5) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. This is likely to be with little notice and will be required in a redacted form.

NG confirmed they have set up a deepdive database and provided laptops to LA's at meetings to show the information they have received. A search box is available on the database so information in a specific area can be found. **NG** expressed the view that the database could be used as a wider tool to provide confidence that all matters are being accurately captured.

IPC asked about how NG were identifying, contacting and working with hard to reach communities.

NG replied that this was a fundamental part of the consultation and they had been heavily dependant on advice from LAs as to who the hard to reach communities were and how to consult them. The community forums had been very helpful and will be a very important mechanism in this regard going forward. The notes from the Community Forum will be made publicly available to inspire confidence in the process as open and transparent. NG confirmed that Planning Aid is still acting as an independent facilitator.

NG confirmed they are working with Somerset County Council to engage with school children and young people and to look for opportunities where National Grid can contribute to a broader highlighting of engineering and technology issues, perhaps linked to the National Curriculum. They confirmed that a request had been made by the HCCG to consider how these 'broader' issues of

	<p>engineering and electricity could be brought to an adult audience also.</p> <p>NG advised a scoping opinion request is likely to be received in December.</p> <p>IPC advised EIA team would require at least 10 working days notice and a GIS shape file to assist the scoping. IPC asked NG if they have considered the scope of the corridor.</p> <p>NG had some concerns about the extent of the corridor and whether they were able to fully define this at present.</p> <p>IPC advised that if a smaller area was used now and this needed to be extended at a later date then this would then need to be reconsidered. A wider area covering all outstanding options would mean that all potential areas had been taken into account at the scoping stage.</p> <p>NG will send dates to IPC to arrange meeting with EIA team.</p> <p>NG would like a further engagement of 12-15 months for the statement of community consultation (SOCC). Meetings will be held with LA's to discuss a moving forward strategy with comprehensive principles and mechanisms. Such reports would be available on the NG website.</p> <p>IPC Advised that the prescribed process does not require a new SoCC. However, there is nothing to prevent NG publishing additional staged or overarching SoCC.</p> <p>IPC advised there is an acceptance checklist on our website which applicants can consider alongside the legislation when considering the preparation of application documents and when finalising any application submission. This checklist will be subject to change particularly with emerging changes to legislation and Government guidance so it is advisable to check that it is the latest version before considering.</p> <p>IPC asked NG if the DCO will cover any special category land. NG may wish to consider the need for special parliament procedures in their timetable if these are required (see s128 of PA2008).</p>
<p>Specific decisions/follow up required?</p>	<p>NG will continue to update IPC on progress towards a scoping request and suggest dates for tripartite meeting with IPC and LA's.</p>

	IPC to attend meeting with NG and LA's. NG to meet with EIA team
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Circulation List	EIA team, Tom Carpen, Legal and NG