



Meeting Note

File reference	EN020002 Bramford to Twinstead Tee 400kV Connection Project
Status	Final
Author	Jolyon Wootton

Meeting with	National Grid, The Environment Partnership and 3G Communications
Meeting date	11 April 2012
Attendees (Planning Inspectorate)	Tom Carpen (Principal Case Manager) Kathryn Powell (Senior Case Manager) Jolyon Wootton (Case Officer) Jan Bessell (Pre-application Examining Inspector)
Attendees (non Planning Inspectorate)	Simon Pepper (Senior Consents Officer, Land and Development Group, National Grid) Steve Knight-Gregson (Principal Specialist, National Grid) Ian Grimshaw (Director, The Environment Partnership) Donna Burnell (3G Communications)
Location	The Planning Inspectorate offices, Bristol

Meeting purpose	Pre-application: To provide an update on the consultation process so far and the programme/timetable going forward.
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Summary of key points discussed and advice given	<p><i>Introductions</i></p> <p>National Grid, The Environment Partnership and 3G Communications were advised of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate's website under s.51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) and that any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.</p> <p>Non-Planning Inspectorate attendees were also advised that, in accordance with procedures, the pre-application Examining Inspector would not be appointed as the Examining Authority should an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) be submitted for 'acceptance'.</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate also discussed the operational</p>
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work of the 7 Sector Teams within the newly created National Infrastructure Directorate, as well as transitional arrangements to the Planning Inspectorate following the abolition of the Infrastructure Planning Commission under the Localism Act 2011.

Project Update and Consultation Strategy

National Grid showed the Planning Inspectorate a map of the area for a proposed new 400kV connection between Bramford substation and the Twinstead Tee junction, denoting the existing substation and 400kV and 132kV overhead lines, along with a power-point presentation on their public consultation undertaken to date.

The Planning Inspectorate was also informed by National Grid of the following from Phase 1 of their consultation:

- That their requirement for a new connection to support proposed new generation including Sizewell C nuclear power plant and other generation in the region was set-out in National Grid's Needs Case for the East Anglia Region and Strategic Optioneering Report (their report that recommended a line between Bramford and Twinstead).
- Based on technical feasibility, 4 possible route corridor options were established following their Route Corridor Study (2009):
 - Route Corridor 1 - parallel to the existing 400kV overhead line between Bramford and Twinstead Tee with no 132kV line removal.
 - Route Corridor 2 - parallel to the existing 400kV line and removing the existing 132kV overhead line between Burstall Bridge and Twinstead Tee, with the new 400kV line routed either south or north near Hintlesham (Corridor 2 Options, A or B).
 - Route Corridor 3 and 4 - two new corridors north of Hadleigh.

Stage 1 public consultation had commenced in October 2009 with the intention to run for approximately 3 months but extended to Spring 2011 to facilitate further engagement on the issues raised. 3G Communications explained that National Grid's consultation strategy had been developed in discussions with local authorities, who had also been consulted on their Statement of

Community Consultation (SoCC). The 4 Corridor options had also shaped the consultation 'zone': an area which included 12,000 households and 61 Parish Councils. National Grid advised that they had hosted a series of staffed public exhibitions at 20 venues, with further project briefings with Town and Parish Councils, as well as consultation with statutory and non-statutory organisations (such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage and Natural England). Over 3,000 individual responses received had expressed a preference or opposition to the corridor options, stating reasons.

The Planning Inspectorate enquired whether National Grid had accounted for both written and oral responses, and asked if stakeholders and organisations had reported on how adequate they found the information material provided and presented. 3G Communications and The Environment Partnership clarified that National Grid had catered for different needs, allowing many attendees at the public events to have one-to-one discussions with project representatives. Further meetings and 'Community Forums' had provided information to representatives of local communities, campaign groups and others, and an additional public information programme during June and July 2010 provided more detailed information on the technical and cost aspects of undergrounding (with fact sheets and a newsletter sent to residents). A feedback report for Stage 1 had also been produced. 3G Communications said that feedback on undergrounding in particular was being assessed alongside baseline environmental and technical data.

Current Focus (Connection Options)

3G Communications and The Environment Partnership explained that public and local authorities' feedback to Stage 1 showed where views had been expressed about corridor options, a 'general consensus' for Corridor 2. The majority of Parish Councils had expressed either opposition to all proposals or stated that Corridor 2 presented the least-worst option. Individuals had also expressed a preference for most of the scheme to be undergrounded, citing specific sites such as Stour Valley and Dedham Vale AONB as particularly sensitive areas to be protected.

Post-July 2011, described as Stage 2 consultation, National Grid refined the consultation zone after discussions with local authorities, (having removed the

more northern corridor options) to 4,000 households and 37 Parish Councils. 6 public exhibitions were held during the summer of 2011 and 4 independently chaired forums were established in September 2011. 8 further public events were held in December 2011 and January 2012 to provide information and to support connection options appraisal process.

National Grid emphasised that it is keen to engage with the public and local stakeholder groups in understanding 'sensitivities'. National Grid acknowledged that some people had expressed frustration with not having a map to show the preferred electricity line. National Grid explained that its announcement of the preferred line and any areas where it is minded to take forward undergrounding was imminent. National Grid has announced Corridor 2 as the preferred route corridor, which would remove the existing UK Power Networks 132kV overhead line running from Burstall Bridge to Twinstead Tee, and at the eastern end, the 2 options of:

- Corridor 2A (extending south from Bramford substation, passing Burstall village and turning west to the south of Hintlesham village).
- Corridor 2B (west of Bramford, passing to the north of Hintlesham).

3G Communications commented that all 37 Parish Councils had been invited to be represented at the Community Forums as well as local stakeholder groups. 3G Communications explained that it had also taken advice from the local authorities on engaging potentially 'hard to reach' group such as the Suffolk Pensioners. National Grid had ensured the use of traditional methods of communications (such as update letters, press articles and a quarterly newsletter to the 4,000 households) to keep those unable to attend the events or visit the project website, informed; in answer to the Planning Inspectorate's questions. 679 persons had attended the events, with 800 response representations received.

Next steps:

- National Grid to publish the Connection Options Report, expected in May 2012.
- On-going alignment consultations, with outcomes, expected to be reported in summer 2012.

EIA Scoping

The Environment Partnership explained National Grid's programme of discussion groups on environmental factors that should be taken into account. These meetings are based 'thematically' covering 'landscape', 'biodiversity' and 'cultural heritage' and are composed of environmental professionals from organisations including local planning authorities, the Wildlife Trust, Natural England, English Heritage, the Environment Agency, Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley Project. 'Observers' are also able to attend. National Grid advised that the notes from these meetings are in the public domain. Feedback from these groups is assisting in the identification of areas of particular sensitivity, as well as establishing the scope of potential mitigation that will inform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) exercise, and the eventual Environmental Statement that will accompany any DCO application. National Grid advised that surveys are to be carried out between 2011 and 2012, depending on environmental factors and conditions.

The Planning Inspectorate emphasised the need to differentiate clearly between any informal consultation (and feedback) from any formal consultation undertaken in discharge of and accordance with PA2008 (as amended). The Planning Inspectorate also added that any findings from interest groups should be properly recorded at the time, and not retrospectively. National Grid said that they had followed this approach and had sought local knowledge to inform, add to and adjust or correct previously collated information. National Grid also commented that there had been significant common ground established between National Grid and consultees on relevant baseline environmental information. In answer to the Planning Inspectorate, National Grid said it has explained its approach to options appraisal and how that involves both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of environmental, socio-economic, technical and cost considerations.

On undergrounding and any technical implications, National Grid was investigating a range of issues such as landscaping and visual impact, biodiversity, heritage assets, wetlands and water-courses, and was taking account of concerns from statutory consultees and others. The Connection Options Report would consider the whole route corridor in 6 study areas based on existing landscape character and consider environmental

effects presented by either undergrounding or overhead lines.

National Grid further answered the Planning Inspectorate's questions on land ownership and occupation issues. Once the preferred alignment was identified, National Grid would become more involved in outlining plans for land rights and any compulsory acquisition. The Planning Inspectorate warned that, if possible, proposed pylon locations and any affects on landowners should be established early to avoid risks to formal consultation. National Grid confirmed that issues related to persons with an interest in the land would be fed into forums with the exception of any privileged information. National Grid's land rights team has been working with its appointed land agents to ascertain accurate information on the legal interests in land as required under PA2008 (as amended) and seeking voluntary access to land for survey. The Environment Partnership said that the positioning of pylons and the possible use of underground cables in certain locations were being explored and that the use of other mitigation techniques such as the use of shorter pylons would be considered in due course. EIA scoping was likely to be requested in August 2012. The Planning Inspectorate advised a meeting should be held soon after scoping with the EIA team at the National Infrastructure Directorate to discuss any draft documents; and direct dialogue between the National Grid and the EIA team could be established should National Grid have specific compliance issues to discuss.

The Planning Inspectorate said that the National Infrastructure Directorate's Advice Notes had been rebadged and amended to reflect legislative changes under the Localism Act 2011.

Project Programme

National Grid said the recommendations set out in the Connection Options Report, subject to any revisions following consultation, would form the basis of the next public consultation activities, which would include their formal consultation stage (Stage 3 consultation – later in 2013) under s.42, s.47 and s.48 of PA2008 (as amended) on their detailed connection design. At Stage 3, National Grid would:

- Publish Preliminary Environmental Information in

	<p>2013;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factor-in, if considered appropriate, consideration of alternatives supplemental to the proposed project; and • Include consideration of associated development such as substation and sealing end compound sites. <p>The DCO application is now expected to be submitted in the Autumn of 2013. National Grid confirmed that only where necessary, notice would be served on land owners (under Schedule 4 of the Electricity Act 1989), to enable appropriate access, rather than seeking to use any powers under PA2008 (as amended).</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate reminded attendees that any substantial change once an application is submitted for acceptance would have to be considered by the Examining authority and judged on its merits within the terms of the legislative framework in place at that time. Attention was drawn to the full terms of the decision in the Brig y Cwm case and the Ministers letter on changes in DCO applications. The applicant would need to ensure that they assessed how much flexibility they needed in any promoted application and consultation process to ensure that any application made was clear and well defined and contained all required elements and assessment, whilst maintaining any flexibility deemed to be required and capable of assessment.</p>
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Specific decisions/ follow up required?	
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Circulation List	Attendees