



Meeting note

File reference	EN020007
Status	Final
Author	Nicholas Coombes
Date	12 August 2015
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	Temple Quay House
Attendees	Robert Powell – Project Manager (National Grid) Judith Vokes – Lead Consents Officer (National Grid) Richard Gwilliam – DCO Manager (National Grid) Kathryn Dunne – Infrastructure Planning Lead (PINS) Helen Lancaster – Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor (PINS) Nicholas Coombes – Case Manager (PINS) Sarah Jones – Case Manager (PINS)
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting to discuss the North West Coast Connections proposal
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Introductions were made and National Grid (NG) confirmed they were aware that a note of the meeting would be taken and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is unable to provide legal advice on which developers and others can rely. NG provided a project update via a presentation. The presentation can be found at the following link.

<http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/document/3358571>

In June 2015 National Grid selected and publicised their route corridor for the proposed connection of a new Nuclear Power Station, known as Moorside near Sellafield, Cumbria to the National Electricity Transmission System. The corridor is typically between 0.2 and 2km wide. The route is currently being further refined into draft Order Limits which will be consulted on during the statutory consultation phase in Q2 2016. Where pylons are to be used, NG anticipate that they would be likely to comprise traditional lattice towers as feedback they have received from local stakeholders to date have indicated a preference for this design over the T-pylon design.

NG anticipates that the project may include the removal of around 150km – 200km of existing lower voltage overhead lines (OHLs) which currently form part of the Distribution Network Operator's (DNO) network. This is contingent on further

investigation and stakeholder engagement. A crossing of Morecambe Bay forms part of the proposed route corridor. This is likely to comprise a bored tunnel at a depth of around 30m below ground/bed, constructed using a tunnel boring machine.

NG explained a number of stakeholders have queried whether a connection to the National Electricity Transmission System could be made using an offshore cable. NG explained that this issue has been investigated but is not proposed to be taken any further at this stage on technical grounds both by NG and the proposed operators of Moorside, NuGen.

NG explained that they use their own figures when comparing the costings for different connection technologies, although NG explained that they are similar to those published by IET.

There is a Planning Performance Agreement in operation with local authorities. NuGen and NG are cooperating closely in their consultation to avoid confusion between the power station and connection projects.

The Planning Inspectorate queried if NG had also considered tunneling under the Duddon Estuary. NG explained that technology connection options are subject to ongoing investigations that will include the consideration of the crossing of the Duddon Estuary. It was also explained that the Duddon Estuary is a different case from Morecambe Bay, as the length of OHL around the Duddon Estuary would be less substantial than Morecambe Bay, so the cost is proportionately much greater.

NG explained the outcome of its consultation on route corridor options. NG has published all feedback on the project website, via a login page, where the responses are categorised and sorted. NG will treat statutory consultation responses similarly.

27 information events are planned for September 2015, in advance of statutory consultation, to explain the route corridor selection.

NG explained that the DCO application will contain generic arrangements for crossing of the existing low voltage network of the DNO (parameters for undergrounding or in-situ construction) but no firm details or decisions will be taken within the application on the exact crossing methods. With this flexibility consent NG would be able to consider individual arrangements with landowners and the DNO following the decision on the DCO application, at the time of works. It is anticipated that details of haul roads and access roads would be denoted on the project's Work Plans. PINS queried if these agreements with landowners could be undertaken at the pre-application stage, as NG will already have a duty to consult with these persons. NG explained that it would consult on these points and consider providing more detail if the individual case merited it. PINS commented that it would provide greater certainty within the application and as a result it could assist in the smooth running of the examination stage. If NG progress with the 'generic arrangements, PINS advised NG to assess the worst case scenario in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

NGs anticipated timeframes for the project are:

Statutory consultation – from Q2 2016 for 90 days

DCO application submission – Q2 2017

Build commences – 2019

First power – 2024

NG explained that the NG and NuGen statutory consultation periods will overlap.

NG would like PINS guidance on the implications of submitting an application simultaneously with NuGen. There is potential for CA plots to overlap between NG and NuGen.

NG is likely to submit 3,000 drawings to describe the scheme. A GIS system with web access is available – can PINS make use of this? NG to email further information about system capability to PINS. PINS identified some initial concerns about using the GIS system but agreed to consider this further.

PINS advised that plans are submitted in North to South order to allow for easy reading. USB stick submissions have been helpful previously. A file sharing system can be used for deadline documents.

PINS can review the draft Statement of Community Consultation and the draft consultation report.

PINS advised NG to carefully check their list of s42 statutory parties, to include all prescribed parties and to cross reference with the book of reference to ensure all persons with an interest in the land are consulted. If any discrepancies exist between the Book of Reference and the list of persons consulted, NG should refer to the DCLG pre-application guidance (paragraphs 49 – 52) in their application.

A scoping request is to be submitted in mid/late-September 2015. It will comprise circa 1,000 pages and 200 drawings. PINS requested a shapefile to be submitted 10 working days in advance. PINS suggested that both hi-res and low-res files were submitted to assist consultees with slow broadband connections. PINS advised that the EIA should carefully define the baseline against which the application is assessed; will it be a future or present baseline? Any potential delay to construction should also be considered when defining the baseline. The approach to defining the baseline should be agreed with statutory consultees if possible. PINS also advised care on defining what other projects are included in the cumulative impact assessment, including associated development.

Consistency between the Moorside and NWCC EIA was discussed. PINS advised that common assessment criteria should be adopted if possible, so that EIAs take a similar approach to defining significance. It would also be helpful in determining cumulative effects if both projects used the same baseline.

An Evidence Plan for European Sites approach was discussed, as was the involvement of the Consents Service Unit. PINS explained that any EPS licenses included in the DCO would be subject to the same tests as stand-alone licenses.

NG noted the potential difficulty of finding large hearing venues in Cumbria. PINS suggested that technical (Issue Specific) hearings may be held in a central location, such as Kendal, but location specific hearings (Open Floor and Compulsory Acquisition) could be held in many smaller venues along the route of the proposal.

PINS agreed to send a pre-application prospectus and a contact plan to be agreed. These could be structured (bi-)monthly phone conversations and less frequent face to face meetings.

PINS proposed to send a copy of the electronic application index so that NG could structure their emerging documents accordingly.

NG lawyers DLA Piper already have access to the SI template, but will need to check for the current version.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

PINS to send NG:

- prospectus and contact plan
- CSU contact details
- The application index template

NG to send PINS:

- details of the GIS system, explaining how they anticipate it being used following submission of the application.