



Meeting note

File reference	EN020007
Status	Final
Author	Sian Thomas
Date	29 January 2016
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	Teleconference
Attendees	Kathryn Dunne (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Will Spencer (EIA Manager) Sian Thomas (Assistant Case Officer) Richard Gwilliam (DCO Manager, National Grid) Simon Pepper (Senior Consents Officer, National Grid)
Meeting objectives	National Grid Update Meeting regarding the North West Coast Connections Project
Circulation	All above.

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

National Grid was familiar with the Planning Inspectorate's statutory duty, under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 as amended (PA 2008), to record the advice that is given in relation to an application or a potential application and to make this publicly available. National Grid was also aware that any advice given by the Planning Inspectorate does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Project Update

National Grid (the developer) stated that they intend to submit their Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the North West Coast Connection Project during the second quarter of 2017 (likely to be the end of March). It was stated that the Moorside nuclear power station developer (NuGen) are pursuing a similar submission date.

It was stated in the previous meeting held on the 12 August 2015 that consultation on the North West Coast Connection Project was due to be undertaken during April 2016. However, National Grid informed the Inspectorate that this has been delayed due to the postponing of meetings with key stakeholders (as a result of the flooding in Cumbria); National Grid has rescheduled the consultation to begin on 2 June 2016. The consultation period will run for a period of 10 weeks and will finish in mid-August

2016.

National Grid expressed their concern regarding the amount of hard copy documents required for submission to the Planning Inspectorate. Due to the scale of the proposed application, 187 sheets at 1:2500 would be required at A1 scale for the works plans alone. The applicant would be unable to use a higher scale on a smaller plan due to the detailed work to be undertaken on the 132kV line. As a result, the applicant made suggestions of using a GIS programme to show the plans electronically, as well as the provision of documents provided on electronic tablets.

The Inspectorate expressed concern regarding the overlapping of the nuclear power station and connection submission dates and pre-application consultation, due to the potential impact on stakeholder's resources. National Grid stated that they will consider this and they are in discussions with NuGen to avoid consultation events taking place on the same date in the same area.

Approach to consultation

The developer expressed that they are engaging regularly with local authorities affected by this proposal and stated that they are in general agreement with the local authorities regarding the content of the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The formal consultation with the relevant local authorities on the content of the SoCC is due to take place from 22 February to the 22 March 2016.

The Inspectorate advised that due to the overlapping consultation period with the Moorside proposal, it may be beneficial for both National Grid and NuGen to share consultation responses where relevant, however the Inspectorate advised that it should be made clear to the consultees if they are taking this approach. It was expressed by the Inspectorate that the timings of the consultation, falling both within and outside of the summer holidays, may be useful in order to gain a wider range of responses, from both local parties and tourists. The Inspectorate also noted the importance of holding consultation outside of the summer holiday period to enable residents, and others, to effectively engage in the consultation.

The importance of consulting effectively with affected persons and landowners during early stages of the application process was reinforced by the Inspectorate. The Inspectorate advised the developer that they need to liaise regularly with landowners at this early stage and aim to reach voluntary agreements.

Due to the vast amount of documents, the developer has stated that they ideally want to deposit hard copies of pre-application consultation documentation at two locations, one being in Cumbria and the other in Lancashire. However Cumbria County Council has asked for two locations within their county for hard copies of the Preliminary Environmental Information. The Inspectorate advised the developer that the local authorities will hold the relevant information on their population in relation to preferences to consultation, and advised that they explore this further with the local authorities if they are considering taking a different approach.

Strategy for stakeholder engagement

The developer stated that the Stakeholder Reference Group for this proposal has been a successful forum in terms of discussing key issues and aspects of the project. The Stakeholder Reference Group consists of around 50 organisations with around 120

representatives. There are a wide range of representatives in the Group such as statutory consultees, local authorities, through to Friends of Lake District and pressure/campaign groups.

In respect of the project, there has been additional ongoing consultation and discussions on topic areas such as landscape and visual impact, cultural heritage and matters such as traffic. Topic related workshops have also been held and the first one was held last Monday. The topic of this workshop discussed geographical issues such as the importance of the National Park.

There are discussions taking place with stakeholders concerning Statements of Common Ground (SoCG.) The Inspectorate advised the developer to look at the wider EIA Evidence Plan process undertaken by the Triton Knoll Electrical System developer.

Emerging issues for discussion

The predominant emerging issue raised by the developer was the concern regarding the sheer volume of the application.

The developer will send the Inspectorate any queries they have on the scoping opinion for discussion at a later meeting. The Inspectorate stated that it would be important to explain how the tunnel waste would be handled and disposed of. The Applicant stated that this would be included in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and that the waste strategy was currently being devised. The Inspectorate stated that if the developer came up with a fixed solution in their waste strategy it is vital for the developer to be able to evidence this and explain how this would be implemented.

Other key issues for consultation

The developer explained that a key issue that has been raised by stakeholders is the possibility of any undergrounding being implemented and what design type of pylon would be proposed.

The developer anticipated further queries from stakeholders on how to get involved in the examination of a DCO application. The Inspectorate explained that there are videos on the Planning Inspectorate website explaining the DCO process. The Applicant expressed that it would be useful to have the link to these videos in order to share with stakeholders.

Completion of PINS contact plan

The Planning Inspectorate and National Grid felt that it would be useful to hold a teleconference every other month to discuss the progression of the project. The applicant stated that they would like to schedule a meeting in person at Temple Quay in two months time to discuss the issues involving consultation and EIA.