



Meeting note

File reference	EN020007
Status	FINAL
Author	Kath Dunne
Date	16 September 2016
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	Telecon
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate: Kath Dunne – Infrastructure Planning Lead Mark Wilson – Infrastructure Planning Lead Richard Hunt – Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor National Grid: John Bevan –Lead Consents Officer Richard Westwood – Project Officer Richard Gwilliam – DCO manager
Meeting objectives	Project update telecon regarding the North West Coast Connection Project
Circulation	All participants

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

National Grid (NG) 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. NG was also aware that any advice given by the Planning Inspectorate does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Project and Programme update

NG explained its proposed consultation and application submission programme. Consultation is due to commence in October 2016 with application submission proposed for quarter 2 2017. NG explained that consultation was initially intended to commence in summer 2016 but has been delayed to have further regard to stakeholder feedback.

Proposals for consultation

NG explained that they are not intending to consult with the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) Local Authority (LA) group again on the Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) as they have already consulted on this document with the relevant LAs twice. NG explained that the updated SOCC reflects a delayed consultation programme and is otherwise substantively the same as that consulted on. NG clarified that this was statutory consultation with the LAs under the PA2008 on the content of the SOCC. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) advised NG to liaise with the LAs on the updated consultation dates and NG confirmed that they have already commenced these discussions. NG stated that discussions with the LAs over either an 8 or 10 week consultation duration were ongoing. NG explained that they were in the process of agreeing a Parish Council engagement strategy with the PPA group. Further funds have been committed to the PPA group where there is a need to support other consultees, to assist during the consultation period.

The Planning Inspectorate explained that the consultation must last a minimum of 28 days (in accordance with the PA2008, however to note the longer timeframes regarding the publishing of notices and information in newspaper articles). The Planning Inspectorate further explained that NG must, under section 49 of the PA 2008, have regard to consultation responses received.

The Planning Inspectorate advised NG to adequately justify within their application documents, why they had not extended the consultation period to 10 weeks as requested by the LAs should they keep to 8 weeks. NG were reminded that it is not just LAs who may wish for a 10 week period, other consultees including members of the public may also wish the consultation to last for this time period. The Planning Inspectorate further advised NG to liaise with NuGen to ascertain if further consultation was planned on the Moorside proposal at the same time as the NG consultation, this may be a reason to reconsider the length of the consultation time period.

Environmental Impact Assessment and survey update

NG is progressing with compiling the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) which will, in effect, comprise of a draft Environmental Statement (ES). NG is progressing with the ES, to meet the submission date. Ecological, socio economic and archaeological surveys have commenced.

NG explained it is meeting regularly with the PPA group, Natural England and Historic England and have also commenced meetings with the Marine Management Organisation to discuss the detail of the Deemed Marine License and conditions to be included within the draft Development Consent Order (DCO). NG noted that they had also had initial meetings with stakeholders regarding their Habitats Regulations Assessment.

NG explained whilst protected species surveys are progressing some investigations may continue after application submission to supplement data sets. The Planning Inspectorate requested confirmation of the extent of completed surveys noting that the Examining Authority can now be appointed earlier in the examination process, following a decision to accept an application. Consequently it's possible that the

Examining Authority may choose to ask for certain information prior to the start of the examination, and this may delay the Preliminary Meeting and the start of the examination, until it is received. The Planning Inspectorate also advised that NG should pursue a Statement of Common Ground with Natural England on this issue, to be submitted with the application.

NG confirmed their work on the Water Framework Directive is still at an early stage.

The Planning Inspectorate queried the landscape mitigation strategy and any offsite or onsite planting. NG explained it will be taking a similar approach to the Richborough Connection Project, where dispersed planting and blocks of planting will be used. For example, blocks of planting will be used around substations and dispersed along the overhead line. For every tree removed, NG will replace with four trees. PINS advised that NG need to be clear which mitigation can be relied upon and if it is achievable.

Site visit and stakeholder meetings

NG and the Planning Inspectorate will consider the most appropriate time to undertake a site visit for this proposal.