



Meeting note

File reference	EN020007
Status	Final
Author	Kay Sully
Date	26 January 2017
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	Telecon
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Kay Sully (Case Manager) Richard Hunt (Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor)
	National Grid Richard Westwood Richard Gwilliam John Bevan
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting concerning the proposed North West Coast Connection project
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

Introduction

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Applicant was already aware of the Inspectorate's openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant (or others) can rely.

The Inspectorate updated the Applicant on the upcoming resourcing structural changes within the Directorate and clarified that Chris White would be taking on the role as the Infrastructure Planning Lead for Energy and Kay Sully was introduced as the case manager for the project.

Project update on s42 consultation

The Applicant started its s42 consultation on 28 October 2016 and it ran for a 10 week period which was completed on 5 January 2017. In total, 30 public events were held with around 2300 people attending. Key areas of attendance were from tunnel head

points across Morecambe Bay (Roosecote, and Heysham); Duddon Estuary; Harker Substation/Rockcliffe area (Near Carlisle). As well as feedback at public events, approximately 8000 responses to the consultation were received.

The Applicant advised that it will be carrying out an internal review of the responses to consultation and so whilst it was not in a position to provide an exhaustive list at present. Issues arising from consultation that had so far been identified included: consideration of alternative technology in the setting of the National Park in particular the Duddon Estuary, cumulative transport effects with Nugen's Moorside proposals, the transport options and the construction effects around the tunnel heads.

The Applicant explained that it continues to engage with the local authorities and statutory bodies such as Natural England on the project. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant it will be important to discuss with the appropriate parties if there is a disagreement in methodologies, and seek common ground on elements of this where appropriate so any differences can be clearly identified, and also where there is elements of agreement.

As part of its consultation, the Applicant will be going through an internal change review process identifying any key areas of potential change as a result of the consultation. Depending on what is decided, further consultation may be undertaken, but this would likely be on a targeted, geographically specific basis. The Applicant was advised to consider the potential impact of any changes on the description of parameters within their application.

The Applicant was advised to be clear in its Consultation Report to distinguish between statutory consultation and non-statutory consultation but to have equal regards to both types of consultation. It was further advised that the report needed to be clear on how the consultation had shaped the development of the project.

Statements of Common Ground

The timing for drafting of Statements of Common Ground (SoCG) was discussed. It was clarified that it is common practise for SoCGs to evolve during the examination but that would also benefit the Secretary of State to know what matters the parties had not agreed upon in the SoCG.

EIA Directive

The Applicant confirmed that it was aware of the new Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations due to be transcribed in May 2017. The Applicant queried the transitional arrangements under the current consultation draft regulations. The Inspectorate advised that its understanding of the transitional arrangements was that a project that had scoped under the Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2009 (as amended) prior to May 2017 would remain subject to those regulations.

Surveys

The Applicant updated the Inspectorate on the current survey programme, noting that potential data gaps flagged previously were being addressed.

Examination

It was noted that this examination is likely to cover a large number of hearings and the Applicant asked whether the Inspectorate would look to hold concurrent hearings. The Inspectorate confirmed that at present, no concurrent hearings have been held on other projects, and there was no indication at present that they would be needed for this project.

The Inspectorate will carefully consider where issue specific hearings would be held, taking into consideration factors such as accessibility, venue availability, etc. Open floor hearings and potential compulsory acquisition hearings may be held in different venues along the proposed route if necessary. This would need to be assessed carefully and venues used as part of the s42 and s47 consultation and areas identified through relevant representations may be considered as appropriate venues. Any information the Applicant could provide on venues in the area would be welcomed by the Inspectorate.

Next meeting

Tuesday 14 March 2017