

Meeting Note

File reference	EN020010 (National Grid Mid Wales Connection project)
Status	Final
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Meeting with	Shropshire Council elected members
Meeting date	7 July 2011
Attendees (IPC)	Jim Claydon (Commissioner) Jessica Potter (Case Leader) Kat Chapman (Case Officer)
Attendees (non IPC)	Ian Kilby (Development Manager) Shropshire Council elected members
Location	Shirehall, Shrewsbury

Meeting purpose	Outreach meeting for Shropshire Council elected members to introduce the IPC and the application process under the Planning Act 2008.
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Summary of key points discussed and advice given	<p>The Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) advised on its policy of openness and transparency. Issues discussed and advice given will be recorded and placed on the IPC's website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 ('the Act'). Any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely. The IPC advised that no advice can be given on the merits of an application.</p> <p>The IPC delivered a presentation outlining the process for determining applications for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) under the Act. A Q&A session followed the presentation and is summarised below.</p> <p>Q. Does a developer need to publish a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) before commencing public consultation? A. Developers are required by legislation to prepare and publish in local newspapers a SoCC setting out how they intend to consult local people on a proposed project. Pre-application consultation is the responsibility of the developer and it is for the developer to decide when to publish the SoCC. Some developers choose to commence public consultation prior to publishing a SoCC and there is nothing in the legislation to prevent this. Publication of the SoCC will always be followed by public consultation. The developer will need to justify its approach to consultation to the IPC when it submits an application.</p> <p>Q. Does community consultation carried out before a SoCC is published still count?</p>
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A. Yes. When the developer submits an application for Development Consent to the IPC, it must include a 'Consultation Report' which details all consultation carried out at the pre-application stage. The Consultation Report must show how the developer has considered consultation responses received and, where it has not had regard to responses, it must explain why not. The adequacy of the developer's consultation will be an important consideration for the IPC in deciding whether or not to accept an application for examination.

Q. What should local people do if they consider that a developer's consultation has been inadequate?

A. In the first instance, people should raise any concerns about the adequacy of consultation with the developer. If, following this, concerns remain, people may contact their local authority who, once an application is submitted to the IPC, is invited to give its views about the developer's consultation. The IPC is happy to be copied in to these representations. Any outstanding concerns about the adequacy of consultation may also be raised as part of written representations to the IPC at pre-examination and examination stages.

Q. How are local authorities expected to fund their engagement with the IPC process when they do not receive fees?

A. The funding of local authorities to fulfil this role is a matter for government. Planning Performance Agreements may be formulated between developers and local authorities to help resource local authority engagement with the IPC process. There are now several examples of PPAs being put in place for NSIPs.

Q. Does the IPC currently charge developers for pre-application advice?

A. No.

Q. Is it true that National Grid's pre-application consultation has now finished?

A. It is the IPC's understanding that Phase 1 of the consultation has now closed. We understand that there will be further chances to comment through future rounds of public consultation before an application is submitted. You should ask the developer for the latest information on its future consultation activities.

Q. Will the next round of consultation narrow the options under consideration?

A. It is for the developer to design its consultation process. Consultation should be an iterative process in which a project evolves through responses from statutory consultees and local communities. In that sense, many developers do find that their project is refined and becomes more clearly defined over time as the consultation process takes place.

Q. There is a feeling that the project name, "Mid Wales

	<p>Connection” is misleading members of the public in Shropshire to think that the project does not affect them. Can the name be changed?</p> <p>A. You should raise this matter with the developer of the project.</p> <p>Q. If Powys County Council grants planning permission for an electricity substation in Powys, what weight would this decision have in the IPC’s decision-making for any associated electric lines project?</p> <p>A. The IPC will consider each application on its individual merits. The approval of a related project should not in any way fetter the IPC’s own decision on a project.</p> <p>Q. In making its decision, can the IPC consider the need for a project?</p> <p>A. Strategic need is a matter to be dealt with by the relevant National Policy Statement(s). For overhead electric lines, the relevant NPSs are EN-1 ‘Overarching Energy’ and EN-5 ‘Electricity Networks Infrastructure’. The NPSs are issued by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and set out the government’s policy on energy infrastructure, including the issue of need. The NPSs provide the primary basis for decisions by the IPC.</p> <p>Q. What weight is given to tourism impacts in IPC decision-making?</p> <p>A. Where relevant, an analysis of tourism impacts will form part of the matters to be assessed within the socio-economic chapter of a developer’s Environmental Statement. This is reflected in EN-1. The weight afforded to any potential impact will be at the Examining Authority’s discretion on the basis of the information provided by all parties. Wherever possible, representations should be based on evidence and/or should draw on the views of representative or industry bodies.</p> <p>Q. If the need for new electricity substations in Shropshire is identified for this project, will Shropshire Council be able to determine the substation(s) location?</p> <p>A. You should direct this query to National Grid as developer of the project. In general, if a new electricity substation is proposed in England as part of an NSIP, the developer may have a choice of options for consenting. It may choose to make the case to wrap a substation into the application to the IPC, or to seek planning consent from the local planning authority. This is for the developer to decide and justify its approach.</p>
<p>Specific decisions/ follow up required?</p>	<p>Shropshire Council members expressed a strong desire for a similar IPC outreach session to be held in Shropshire for parish/town councils and other key local stakeholders including community interest groups. IPC and Shropshire Council to take this matter forward. <i>(Post-meeting note: 22 September</i></p>

	<i>has now been identified as the date for this outreach session).</i>
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Circulation List	All attendees