



## Meeting note

<b>File reference</b>	EN020016
<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	Wendy Maden
<b>Date</b>	24 October 2014
<b>Meeting with</b>	Western Power Distribution (WPD)
<b>Venue</b>	Teleconference
<b>Attendees</b>	Kath Powell – The Planning Inspectorate Nicholas Coombes - The Planning Inspectorate Steffan Jones - The Planning Inspectorate Richard Kent - The Planning Inspectorate Wendy Maden - The Planning Inspectorate  Representing WPD: David Kenyon - AMEC Victoria Robinson - RSK Jason Pacey – Copper Consultancy
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Project update meeting on the proposed Brechfa Forest Electricity Connection
<b>Circulation</b>	All

The developer was made aware of the Planning Inspectorate's openness policy (that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate's website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008), as amended). Any advice given does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

### Project Update

The developer stated that following recent programme updates the timetable for the Brechfa Forest East Wind Farm project was now behind that of Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm. The result of this delay is that the developer had been instructed by the wind farm developer that the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) will now only contain the one connection to Brechfa Forest West Wind Farm. However, the developer confirmed that this proposed single connection DCO could facilitate further connections in the future, such as that of the Brechfa East project. An announcement of the change to the proposed DCO has been made on the developer's website and in hard copy to selected parties.

The developer highlighted that it is no longer necessary to upgrade the Swansea to Llandyfaelog line in light of the changes to the proposed DCO. This is for information, as the line upgrade (which would be permitted development) was not to be included in the DCO prior to these discussions.

The developer confirmed that Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have been consulted during the ongoing preparation of the draft Environmental Statement (ES). The developer is in contact with CCC regarding the scope of air quality and noise assessments within the ES. The Planning Inspectorate highlighted the importance of maintaining a thorough audit trail by detailing consultation activities in appendices to chapters. The developer confirmed that each chapter in the draft ES will contain a summary of correspondence.

The developer confirmed that general engagement with all statutory consultees so far has been positive. NRW has appointed an officer as a point of contact for this scheme. A landscape consultant has been appointed by both NRW and CCC jointly to appraise the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) methodology and assessment work conducted by the developer.

The Planning Inspectorate asked the developer to explain the approach to the cumulative impact assessment given the changes made to the proposed DCO. The developer explained that they will consider the cumulative assessment of a number of connections within the ES, with consideration of the possible Brechfa East connection in the future.

A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) will be composed with CCC following the start of the consultation period. The developer intends that this will be a document which is continually updated throughout the pre-application and examination stages of the process. It was suggested by the Planning Inspectorate that a draft iterative SoCG signed by the council is included in the submitted application documents.

Comments received from CCC on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) were considered and addressed in discussion with the council. Subsequently, following a CCC Committee meeting, the SoCC was passed unanimously in its current form. The Planning Inspectorate recommended that this correspondence with the council should be included in the Consultation Report.

### **Next steps in the process**

Although the indicative design has progressed since the last meeting, there are details still to finalise. Issues with land access have prevented full design information being obtained as of yet. The Planning Inspectorate highlighted that the amended route to Brechfa West should be consulted on.

The developer plans to include in the Statement of Reasons (SoR) justification for the proposed connection of Brechfa West alone to Llandyfaelog. This will discuss the sequence of events that led to the amendment of the proposal in terms of number of connections. It will also contain explanation that the proposed route and capacity remains suitable for the revised project objective.

The consultation period is scheduled to begin on 28 November 2014 and will run for seven weeks to accommodate the Christmas period. Six public events have been

arranged, four prior to Christmas and two following, which consist of a mix of afternoons, evenings and weekends. It is intended that the final design can be completed following this consultation and feedback in February 2015, with the DCO application to be made in April 2015.

The developer raised a question about the need for specific plans to be included in the application to show trees to be removed. The developer acknowledged that information on the removal for trees will be required and provided in relation to their landscape, visual and ecological importance. The Planning Inspectorate agreed that the provision of information on trees to be removed is not specifically prescribed under the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009, and generally welcomed the developers approach that the application will contain sufficient information to understand the potential for significant effects to arboriculture in relation to their landscape, visual and ecological importance among other relevant and site specific factors. The Planning Inspectorate advised that application documents should therefore be clear in respect of explaining and justifying the arboricultural assessment works undertaken and supporting plans provided (and where applicable, evidence should be provided to demonstrate agreement with the relevant consultees). The Planning Inspectorate also recommended that specific attention is paid to potentially affected trees and hedgerows that are subject to tree preservation orders (TPO) and Important Hedgerows as classified under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 respectively.

The developer also asked whether certain plans describing the scheme should be provided separate to, or included within, the ES. The Planning Inspectorate agreed that providing some plans separately to the ES (provided that they were properly referenced) would aid legibility to consultees.

Documents to be presented as part of the formal statutory consultation process are confirmed as; Draft ES (the Preliminary Environmental Information Report) and Non-Technical Summary. These will be accompanied by an Overview document, Feedback form and updated SoR.

The developer stated an intention to consult upon the draft DCO on a non-statutory basis by undertaking targeted meetings alongside the statutory consultation period under s47 of the PA 2008, rather than including the draft DCO within the set of consultation documents.

It was confirmed by the developer that work and discussions on the scope of form of the required Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) supporting documents had been started in consultation with NRW. The developer also confirmed that draft HRA documents will not be included within the draft ES that will form the Preliminary Environmental Information. The Planning Inspectorate reminded the developer that they are able to offer a review of any draft HRA reports in advance of the application submission. The developer suggested that a submission draft of the HRA report(s) will be circulated for comments once completed in consultation with NRW.

## **Actions**

The developer is to send the Planning Inspectorate an updated DCO boundary and indicative route plan, following the decision to submit a single connection DCO, a link to their most recently updated website and their latest programme leading up to the submission of the application.

The Planning Inspectorate is to contact Neil Bromwich of Osborne Clark with regard to queries on the draft DCO.

A meeting is to be arranged for the first week of December to update on progress of the proposed application; the developer is to suggest possible dates to the Planning Inspectorate.