



Meeting note

File reference	Richborough Connection Project
Status	Final
Author	Ian Wallis
Date	21 st August 2014
Meeting with	National Grid
Venue	The Planning Inspectorate, Bristol
Attendees	Kathryn Powell, Infrastructure Planning Lead (The Planning Inspectorate) Oliver Lowe, Section Manager, Consents Service Unit (The Planning Inspectorate) Will Spencer, EIA Advisor (The Planning Inspectorate) Jill Warren, Senior EIA Advisor (The Planning Inspectorate) Ian Wallis, Case Officer (The Planning Inspectorate) Ken Guest, Project Engineer (National Grid) Emer McDonnell, Consents Officer (National Grid) Karen Wilson (EIA Manager - Amec)
Meeting objectives	Update to the Richborough Connection Project
Circulation	Attendees; to be published on the planning portal website

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Following introductions, the Planning Inspectorate described its openness policy: that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the Planning Inspectorate's website under Section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) (PA 2008). Such advice, however, does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely. National Grid was made aware that a note of the meeting would be made available on the 'planning portal' website.

Project Update

National Grid updated the Planning Inspectorate on the proposed Richborough Connection Project, providing a presentation on the background and the current position they had reached with it.

National Grid explained that National Grid Nemo Link Limited and the Belgian Elia group are proposing a 1000MW Interconnector electricity link between Zeebrugge, in Belgium, to Richborough near Sandwich in Kent, known as 'Nemo Link[®]'.

National Grid's proposed Richborough Connection Project will connect Nemo Link[®] to the UK's national grid high voltage electricity transmission system. There is no National Grid transmission infrastructure at Richborough and the existing distribution lines in the Richborough area that are owned by UK Power Networks (UKPN) do not have the capacity to carry 1000MW. The UKPN distribution lines operate at 132kV. New transmission infrastructure is required and this proposal is intended to provide a new transmission connection between Richborough and the existing transmission system. UKPN have agreed that their existing 132 kV line between Richborough and Canterbury can be removed as part of this project.

The proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) application includes a 400kV electricity transmission connection for overhead electric lines between Richborough and Canterbury.

Nemo Link[®] submitted planning applications to Thanet and Dover District Councils for the onshore elements of the Interconnector at Richborough including a converter station, an electricity substation and underground cables between Richborough and Pegwell Bay. These are to be located within an eight hectare site, formerly occupied by the Richborough Power Station. National Grid said that Thanet and Dover District Councils have given outline planning permission for applications for these elements of the Interconnector.

National Grid explained their approach to the design and routing of new electricity transmission lines generally, involving a 6 stage process which recognises the environmental and social impacts as well as system and cost issues. Their approach is for early and meaningful engagement with stakeholders and communities in order to understand local considerations. Options appraisal methods are applied on a case-by-case basis.

National Grid outlined the two transmission route corridor options between Richborough and Canterbury they have identified in relation to their 'Strategic Options Report' (SOR). National Grid said that each route corridor option started at Richborough owing to their connection agreement with Nemo Link[®]. The SOR set out National Grid's option for a connection between Richborough and Canterbury, and this has been taken forward to form the basis of National Grid's 'Route Corridor Study'. This study seeks to identify broad potential corridor options for the new transmission route, and includes further data gathering on environmental constraints and field studies.

National Grid stated that consultation with the public and other stakeholders on the preferred connection options and route corridor study took place in summer 2013. Following the feedback received from the consultation, the Richborough to Canterbury northern corridor option was confirmed as National Grid's preferred route corridor.

In May 2014 National Grid published a 'draft route' within the preferred route corridor. The draft route through the preferred corridor is being refined and reconsidered in terms of the design of pylon, technology types, and alignment options, through an options appraisal process.

National Grid said they were engaging with statutory bodies and seeking access to land to survey for the project.

National Grid explained that consideration of the need for underground cabling options for the project, in respect of landscape character areas for instance, had resulted in a decision that this would be unnecessary; National Grid explained that there are no Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the overhead transmission connection would not have a negative visual impact on local landscapes.

The line of the draft route north of Broad Oak takes into account the potential impact on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and need to avoid a proposed reservoir which has meant that the line of the route may be closer to the village of Broad Oak.

National Grid said that six information events were held in June 2014 to provide an update on the project. They notified local residents directly of these events through letters and 'save the date' cards in addition to local media and newsletters. These events have raised some key issues, such as the risk of the collision of geese from Monkton reservoir with proposed transmission lines.

National Grid outlined their current activity which included sending the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate.

National Grid have been holding on-going meetings with people with an interest in the land required for the development (PILs), as well as prescribed consultees and other bodies. They have also been continuing to carry out environmental surveys and progressing the preliminary environmental information report (PEIR).

National Grid said that they have been developing the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).

National Grid gave a brief overview of the works relating to the Richborough Connection Project. This included a new Richborough to Canterbury 400kV connection; the removal of the existing 132kV electricity transmission line owned by UKPN; the Richborough substation consented by Nemo Link®; the Canterbury substation with works covered by permitted development; Bolney and Ninfield substations (circuit swap and voltage support equipment) works covered by permitted development; re-conductor of the Canterbury to Sellindge to Dungeness electricity transmission line; and a circuit swap at Lydd, Kent whose works relate to the ElecLink project under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989.

Overview of programme

National Grid explained the key dates in their project programme timetable. Nemo Link® has applied for a transmission connection for their 1000MW Interconnector at Richborough by 2018. In order to meet this deadline, National Grid stated that they would need to start construction of the transmission connection in Spring 2017.

If an NSIP application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in 2015 and granted by the relevant Secretary of State in 2016, construction could commence in 2017.

National Grid added that their programme anticipated the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application in September 2015, with the SoCC finalised by December 2014. The Section 46 notice and consultation under Sections 42 and 47 of the PA 2008 would need to take place by January 2015.

Scoping Report

The Planning Inspectorate asked about phasing for ecological surveys and how this would affect the timing of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). National Grid replied that they were working on the phasing requirements for the preliminary environmental information report (PEIR) and were aware of flooding risks.

National Grid asked if there were any procedural issues that the Planning Inspectorate had identified for the Scoping Opinion. The Planning Inspectorate explained that they were still assessing the Scoping Report but no procedural issues had been identified so far, and the report had been sent out for consultation to the statutory consultation bodies to be notified under Regulation 9 of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.

National Grid asked if the Planning Inspectorate could provide a copy of their list of scoping consultees. The Planning Inspectorate stated that the list would be provided at the back of the Scoping Opinion (once issued). The Planning Inspectorate referred to its separate duty to provide National Grid with a list of bodies notified under EIA Regulation 9, but explained that it was not in a format that could easily be sent to National Grid at present, and further administrative work is required to finalise the list for issue. The Planning Inspectorate explained that the priority is to prepare the Scoping Opinion, for the deadline of 19 September 2014, but agreed to send a copy of the Regulation 9 list as soon as possible.

TEN-E Regulation discussion

National Grid and the Planning Inspectorate discussed the project in relation to the TEN-E Regulation EU347/2013 ('TEN-E Regulation') as it would be connecting and contributing to European Union energy networks. The Planning Inspectorate will act on behalf of the Secretary of State or the National Competent Authority (NCA) as appropriate for the purposes of the TEN-E Regulation.

National Grid said that this project is currently the only TEN-E electricity transmission project that National Grid Electricity Transmission were involved with, and they had found the note which the Planning Inspectorate had provided for the meeting, interpreting the sequence of procedures under TEN-E in conjunction with the procedural requirements for the PA 2008, to be helpful and they had nothing to add to it.

National Grid said they anticipated submitting their TEN-E notification under Article 10.1 (a) of the Regulation in September 2014.

The Planning Inspectorate and National Grid discussed the level of information required within this notification. National Grid proposed issuing a letter with links to the relevant information within the Scoping request and asked whether this would be sufficient as part of the notification. The Planning Inspectorate said it would be helpful if National Grid attached any relevant information from the Scoping request as annexes, for instance, instead of just referring to or linking to the information in a letter. They could then publish this information on the Planning Inspectorate's National Infrastructure website project page for the Richborough Connection Project and this would enable other parties to view the information more easily.

The Planning Inspectorate advised National Grid that they would need to be very clear, and include as much information as possible, on their timetable from now up until the submission of the NSIP application, as the Planning Inspectorate would need to make a decision as to whether or not National Grid would be able to submit their

application within 2 years, although as National Grid are aiming for September 2015 for submission, this period has therefore been reduced to a year.

Article 10.4(a) of the TEN-E Regulation was also discussed, particularly where it states '*the competent authority shall identify, in close cooperation with the other authorities concerned.....the scope of material and level of detail of information to be submitted by the project promoter*'. National Grid and the Planning Inspectorate held a discussion regarding the definition of '*other authorities concerned*'.

Article 10(4)(b) states the competent authority shall draw up a detailed schedule for the permit granting process. National Grid thought it would be helpful if they began to draft this schedule and they agreed they could send the information for the Planning Inspectorate to consider. The Planning Inspectorate thought that their Consents Service Unit (CSU) may also be able to help with this.

National Grid said they intended to merge their '*concept of public participation*' under Article 9.3 of the TEN-E Regulations with their SoCC. The Planning Inspectorate mentioned that the word '*public*' isn't defined in the TEN-E Regulation and it is possible that National Grid's '*concept of public participation*' could also include consultation under Sections 42 and 47 and publicity under Section 48.

National Grid said that they may submit their '*concept of public participation*' to the Planning Inspectorate prior to receiving their acknowledgement of the notification as they can see nothing within the TEN-E Regulation that would stop them from doing this. National Grid aims to submit this to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of October 2014, in the same period they are intending to send their SoCC to the relevant local authorities.

National Grid explained their intention to submit one consultation report containing both TEN-E and PA 2008 information.

Referring to Article 10.4 (c) of the TEN-E Regulation, National Grid queried if the Planning Inspectorate could start the 3 month period to '*accept*' the draft '*application file*' when the formal NSIP application was submitted for acceptance. The Planning Inspectorate suggested that National Grid could start the 3 month period by sending draft documents for the Planning Inspectorate to comment on, and the formal NSIP application could be submitted in the third month allowing the Planning Inspectorate to consider the application in the 28-day formal acceptance period.

National Grid asked what would happen if they submitted the formal NSIP application after the 3 month period in Article 10.4 (c) and the Planning Inspectorate did not think this was a problem. The Planning Inspectorate said they are happy to discuss this further if this situation is likely to arise.

The Planning Inspectorate clarified that they would not extend the 28-day acceptance deadline, and that there is no provision in the legislation allowing the Planning Inspectorate to request missing information during the 28 day acceptance period for a NSIP application.

In response to an enquiry from National Grid, the Planning Inspectorate advised that the TEN-E Regulation does not appear to include consents normally required for an infrastructure project as part of the DCO process under the PA 2008. These consents would still need to be sought from the relevant consenting authorities. The Planning

Inspectorate highlighted this advice by directing National Grid to paragraphs 2.3 and 3.8 of the '*Manual of Procedures: the permitting process for Projects of Common Interest - the TEN-E Regulation EU 347/2013*' (Department of Energy & Climate Change, May 2014).

The Planning Inspectorate described the free service that the Consents Service Unit (CSU) could provide to National Grid should they consider using it. The Planning Inspectorate gave an overview of what the CSU could provide to applicants, including working with them on a timetable for gaining consents outside the NSIP process; helping to develop a plan or provide advice on how to seek consents; and providing advice on this in relation to the TEN-E process. The CSU emphasised that their advice was for the developer to use as they saw fit and provided National Grid with a prospectus to consider.

Specific decisions / follow up required

National Grid suggested that it might be useful to have another meeting with the Planning Inspectorate after September 2014 following the notification of the TEN-E Regulation for the project.

It was agreed that National Grid and the Planning Inspectorate should clarify what 'other authorities' meant under the TEN-E Regulation under Article 10.4 (a).

The Planning Inspectorate welcomed any further questions that National Grid may wish to raise following the 21 August 2014 meeting.