



Meeting note

File reference	EN020021
Status	Final
Author	Siân Evans
Date	10 July 2017
Meeting with	SP Manweb
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Siân Evans (Case Officer) Alison Down (EIA and land rights advisor) Katherine King (EIA and land rights advisor) SP Manweb Steven Edwards
Meeting objectives	North Shropshire Reinforcement project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Welcome and introductions

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate continued by outlining its 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.

Project update

The Applicant stated that they propose to start their statutory consultation in autumn 2017. The Inspectorate advised that if the consultation period includes the Christmas period the Applicant may wish to consider extending the consultation into the New Year to ensure consultees have sufficient time to give informed responses.

The Applicant advised that a new option (the Woodhouse option) has now been included in the proposals, due to feedback from a landowner. Although this was not included in the Applicant's Scoping Report it has been covered by the technical surveys. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to make it clear to consultees and in

their published material that the proposed development includes a new option that was not considered at scoping stage.

The Applicant advised that they do not propose to include any alternative options for the overhead line route in their application submission.

The Applicant intends to submit the application Q2 2018.

Compulsory Acquisition

The Applicant advised that they are negotiating wayleave agreements with landowners, however some may not agree and therefore they will apply for compulsory acquisition for those plots. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that this approach should be evidenced and justified in the Statement of Reasons. National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5) contains relevant guidance with regard to this issue.

The Applicant confirmed that, as advised by DCLG in guidance on the pre-application process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-pre-application-process-for-major-infrastructure-projects>), that they will be consulting all persons with an interest in land.

The Applicant advised that the width of the route corridor may vary as there is less flexibility in the wayleave process and therefore the corridor will be narrower for those plots. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that they will need to justify why the corridor is wider for any plots where the Applicant is seeking compulsory acquisition. In accordance with PA2008 the Examining Authority will need to be satisfied that land to be acquired is no more than is reasonably required for the purposes of the development.

Undergrounding

The Applicant advised that they are considering undergrounding lower voltage lines that cross the proposed line. The Inspectorate advised that if this is intended to be mitigation it will need to be secured in the Development Consent Order (DCO) so that the ExA has assurance that it can be delivered.

The Applicant is also proposing undergrounding a section of the proposed line at Oswestry. The Applicant considers that they can do this under permitted development rights. The Inspectorate advised that if any compulsory acquisition is required for this then it will need to be included in the DCO. If it is not included in the DCO it will need to be explained in the application and described in the Environmental Statement (ES) so that consultees fully understand the project. The Applicant will need to include it in the cumulative effects assessment and report the findings in the ES.

Associated development

The Applicant advised that there is currently no associated development in their proposals. The Inspectorate advised that access arrangements could be included as associated development.

The Applicant stated that they are using one main construction compound which is an existing depot in Oswestry and a number of smaller laydown areas closer to the line

route. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider the potential for increased traffic impacts resulting from the project. The Applicant should assess the worst case scenario and if it is then considered that there is unlikely to be a significant effect it could potentially be scoped out of the ES, with the agreement of the Highway Authority.

Consultation

The Applicant advised that there will be some views of the proposed development from parts of Oswestry and so the affected parts of Oswestry will be consulted. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider wider consultation in Oswestry due to the construction compound. There should be evidence in the Consultation Report of who has been consulted and justification provided for the consultation approach taken and where consultation has not taken place.

Scoping Opinion

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to make clear in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and Statement of Community Consultation that the application will be dealt with under transitional provisions in the 2017 EIA Regulations that apply the 2009 EIA Regulations to the application.

The Applicant queried whether underground hydrology could be scoped out of the EIA. The Inspectorate advised that the Scoping Opinion confirmed that this could only be scoped out in relation to heritage assets, on the basis of the information provided in the Scoping Report.

The Applicant stated that they had agreed with the Council that noise could be scoped out of the EIA. The Inspectorate advised that there had been insufficient information in the Scoping Report to agree this at that stage, and that if the Applicant wished to scope this topic out they needed to provide information in the ES to justify their reasons for doing this.

The Applicant queried the Secretary of State's concern that no reptile surveys were to be conducted. The Inspectorate explained that it is unusual not to include a reptile survey in the EIA. There is a risk in choosing not to assess potential impacts on reptiles as, in the absence of information, the issue may be raised by the ExA or other parties during the Examination. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to seek Natural England's views on this.

Draft Documents

The Inspectorate advised that it is useful to build in time to the timetable for a review of draft documents. This usually takes place at least two to three months prior to the submission of the DCO application. The full ES cannot be reviewed but the Inspectorate can look at the description of the development and the introductory (non-technical) chapters.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

The Inspectorate will update the name of the Applicant on the Inspectorate's website.