



<b>Overview - Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State</b>	
<b>Project name:</b>	Keuper Gas Storage Project
<b>Address/Location:</b>	The gas storage cavities and processing plant would be located within the Holford Brinefield, Cheshire, approximately 4 km north of Junction 18 of the M6 motorway. The Project would utilise existing infrastructure including brine pipelines connecting the Holford Brinefield with Runcorn, brine pumping stations and mains water supply. A new section of brine pipeline and outfall would also be constructed near Weston Point, Runcorn.
<b>Planning Inspectorate Ref:</b>	EN030002
<b>Date(s) screening undertaken:</b>	First screening – 26 June 2014 following the applicant's request for a scoping opinion
<b>EEA States identified for notification:</b>	First screening: None identified

<b>FIRST TRANSBOUNDARY SCREENING UNDERTAKEN BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE</b>	
<b>Document(s) used for transboundary Screening:</b>	Keuper Gas Storage Project –Environmental Scoping Report (March 2014) ('the Scoping Report')
<b>Date</b>	June 2014
<b>Screening Criteria:</b>	<b>Secretary of State Comments:</b>
<b>Characteristics of the Development</b>	<p>The Project comprises brine solution mining to create underground cavities for the storage of natural gas. The Holford Brinefield already hosts two existing underground gas storage facilities, operated by Storengy and E.On.</p> <p>The Project requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrades to and extensions of existing brine export and water supply systems to create the underground gas storage cavities</li> <li>• New infrastructure to facilitate the storage and transfer of gas to / from the National Grid's gas network, the National Transmission System.</li> </ul> <p>The Project will allow for the import of natural gas from the National Transmission System for storage during periods of low demand, and export (after treatment) to the National Transmission System during high demand.</p> <p>The gas storage facility will be designed to store a working gas volume of approximately 500 standard million cubic metres (mcm) of natural gas, with an import and export capability of up to 34 mcm per day. The total gas stored on site, including 'cushion' gas (gas permanently held within the cavities until decommissioning), will be up to approximately 800,000 tonnes.</p> <p>The Project will involve the creation of 19 no. underground gas storage cavities and associated surface gas wellheads and compounds together with associated ancillary equipment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas Processing Plant and gas marshalling compounds</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Underground gas pipelines linking the National Transmission System, the Gas Processing Plant and gas storage cavities</li> <li>• Electrical supply connection to the gas processing plant (a new pylon tower connection to the existing 132KV overhead power line and a new section of approximately 1km overhead 33KV (pole) power line to the electrical substation of the Gas Processing Plant).</li> </ul> <p>The project construction phase is outlined as being approximately 6 years (including enabling works), and is expected to commence in 2016. The applicant also states that solution mining will commence in 2018, with the earliest gas storage capacity available from 2020.</p> <p>The operational design life of the proposed project is defined as being <i>'a minimum of 40 years, although longer periods of operation are anticipated'</i>.</p> <p>Decommissioned gas caverns will be filled with saturated brine which the applicant states will <i>'provide geotechnical and chemical stability in the long term'</i>. Once decommissioned, the land is proposed to be returned to agriculture (although the SoS notes that <i>"The agricultural operations within the Holford Brinefield currently successfully operate alongside the existing gas storage infrastructure"</i> (section 6.9.3 of the Applicant's Scoping Report).</p>
<p><b>Geographical area</b></p>	<p>The Applicant states at section 1.3.5 of the Scoping Report that <i>'The Project is not likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA State'</i>.</p>
<p><b>Location of Development (including existing use)</b></p>	<p>The proposed development site is located approximately 30km southwest of Manchester and 30km east of Chester.</p> <p>The proposed development site sits within a generally flat agricultural plain with small to medium field enclosures commonly bound by dense hedgerows with hedgerow trees. Existing land use broadly comprises agricultural land used for livestock grazing with few other community facilities, tourist activity or local businesses. The existing gas storage facilities within the Holford Brinefield are noted, and the applicant states that agricultural operations currently successfully operate alongside this existing gas storage infrastructure.</p> <p>The closest settlement to the proposed development site is Byley, located immediately to the southeast of the site. The proposed DCO site boundary includes within it the small settlements of Broken Cross, Lostock Green and Lach Dennis.</p> <p>There are also a number of properties, farm houses and outbuildings within the proposed DCO application site boundary, including: Drakelow Farm, Drakelow Hall Farm, Brownhayes Farm, Drakelow Gorse Farm, Green Lea, Stublach Farm and Stublach Dairy Farm.</p> <p>The nearest EEA member state is the Republic of Ireland, which is in excess of 200km west from the proposed development</p>

	site.
<b>Cumulative impacts</b>	<p>The applicant has not explicitly identified other development schemes that will be included as part of the assessment of cumulative effects. However, section 1.4 of the Scoping Report outlines their approach to the assessment of cumulative impacts:</p> <p><i>'Schemes in the vicinity of the Project, which have been granted permission (whether in outline or full), or for which an application for consent has been submitted but not determined, will be considered together with the Project in the assessment of cumulative effects'.</i></p>
<b>Carrier</b>	Potential pollution to air, land and water and disturbance, loss and damage to geology, soils, habitats and fauna during construction, operation and decommissioning of the proposed development.
<b>Environmental Importance</b>	<p>There are a number of Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI) within 10km of the Holford Brinefield Site as well as two Ramsar sites (Midland Meres and Mosses Phases 1 and 2) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (West Midland Mosses). However, the Applicant does not identify any of these designated sites as being within 2km of the main development area of the site (the area of most intensive and extensive development where gas storage cavities and a Gas Processing Plant are proposed).</p> <p>The SoS notes that the proposed brine outfall pipe near Weston Point in Runcorn lies within 200m of the Mersey Estuary Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site.</p> <p>The applicant also identifies presence of European protected species (Great Crested Newts and Bats) as well as nationally protected species (Badger, Water Vole, Breeding / Wintering Birds and Lesser silver water beetle) at the proposed development site.</p> <p>Although it lies outside of the proposed DCO boundary, there is a single Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) in the centre of the Holford Brinefield Site area (Drakelow Hall Moated Site, Fishponds and Moated Enclosure). There is a further SAM and one listed building within the study area defined by the applicant.</p> <p>The main Holford Brinefield Site area lies within the catchment area of the River Mersey, and the River Dane (a Main River under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) classification) lies approximately 800m to the east. Within the site itself, there is the Puddinglake Brook plus a number of other unnamed watercourses, including field drains and ditches all of which flow east to the River Dane.</p>
<b>Extent</b>	Not identified in the Scoping Report. On the basis of the design measures built into the development and the implementation of mitigation measures and best practice (in line with regulatory body requirements), no significant effects have been identified which could impact on another EEA Member State.

<b>Magnitude</b>	No impacts identified which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
<b>Probability</b>	No impacts identified which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
<b>Duration</b>	No impacts identified which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
<b>Frequency</b>	No impacts identified which would be likely to affect another EEA State.
<b>Reversibility</b>	No impacts identified which would be likely to affect another EEA State.

### **Transboundary screening undertaken by the Secretary of State**

Under Regulation 24 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 (as amended) (the EIA Regulations) and on the basis of the current information available from the Applicant, the Secretary of State is of the view that the proposed development **is not likely** to have a significant effect on the environment in another EEA State.

In reaching this view the Secretary of State has applied the precautionary approach (as explained in the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 12: Transboundary Impacts Consultation); and taken into account the information currently supplied by the Applicant.

**Action:**

No further action required at this stage

**Date:** 26 June 2014

**Note:** The Secretary of State's duty under Regulation 24 of the EIA Regulations continues throughout the application process.

Note:

1. The Secretary of State's screening of transboundary issues is based on the relevant considerations specified in Annex 4 to Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 12 available on the Planning Inspectorate's website at <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>