

Meeting note

Project name	Aldbrough Hydrogen Storage
File reference	EN030003
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	4 April 2023
Meeting with	Equinor / SSE / ERM
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Project Update

Aldbrough Hydrogen Storage project is a joint venture between Equinor and SSE Thermal. The Applicant updated the Inspectorate that the proposed scope now excludes the connecting pipeline that was originally proposed in the inception meeting; this will now be promoted separately as part of the wider hydrogen network in the Humber. The project will include the construction of up to nine underground salt caverns at a depth of around 1.8km below ground level, with a total storage capacity of up to 420 million cubic metres. The Applicant continues regular engagement with the local community through the Aldbrough Community Liaison Group. It was confirmed that construction will commence earliest 2026 with the earliest operational date of 2029.

Scoping

The Scoping Report is planned for submission in May 2023. The red line boundary encompasses the onshore area for the subsurface caverns (cavities), the above ground facilities and the nearshore marine area for seawater abstraction and brine discharge infrastructure and is consistent with land ownership boundaries. The Applicant confirmed there is a wide marine boundary to conduct marine surveys in the North Sea, and that the boundary will be refined closer to the submission of the application. Onshore, the area proposed to host the processing facilities and the wellheads have already been landscaped due to a previous natural gas project. The Applicant confirmed they are completing photographic surveys to ascertain whether further screening prior to the application is necessary.

Consenting Programme

The Applicant gave an overview of the baseline environmental survey work planned through 2023, including terrestrial ecology studies, winter bird surveys and a marine survey proposed to be held this summer.

Phase 1 non-statutory consultation is planned to commence at the end of June to early July 2023, after the Scoping Opinion, as per advice from the Inspectorate. The Applicant has also started work on the Statement of Community Consultation and has planned to have this available in April 2024. The submission of the PEIR is planned for Q1 2024, and the Applicant is planning to undertake statutory consultation in Q1 2024. The Applicant set a planned DCO application submission date of Q4 2024.