



Meeting note

Project name	Teesside Flexible Regas Port
File reference	EN040001
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	7 February 2024
Meeting with	Teesside Flexible Regas Port Ltd
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Inception 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.

The Inspectorate explained that the publication of the meeting note could be delayed up to six months, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted (if requested by an Applicant for commercial reasons).

The Applicant

WaveCrest Energy LLC (WCE) are leading the development of the Teesside Flexible Regas Port (TFRP); a company formed by Macquarie Capital to develop and invest in innovative energy projects. The WCE team have experience of developing projects in the Teesside area (Teesside GasPort). WCE has created a special purpose vehicle, Teesside Flexible Regas Port Ltd, who is the Applicant for the project.

The Proposed Development and Site

The site lies on the western bank of the River Tees, in close proximity to the Seal Sands site, to the north-east of Middlesborough, and forms some 6-7 acres. The site includes other industrial users, such as Conoco Phillips and Nor Sea.

A new marine jetty is proposed (as associated development) to accommodate large vessels transporting Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Typically, vessels would be moored for approximately 6 days.

Offloading equipment will transport natural gas from the vessel to the regasification and storage plant.

The Applicant currently has two pipeline routing options for connecting the regasification plant to the national transmission system (NTS); a northern option, which is the Applicant's preferred option, and a southern option. It is the Applicant's intention to remove this optionality prior to the submission of the DCO application. The approximate length of this pipeline is 4.5km, and the maximum flow rate is 22-28 million m³ per day.

Some dredging of a berth pocket is needed to ensure that the water depth is sufficient to accommodate the vessels.

The Applicant is seeking to provide a market reactive access point for LNG supply to enhance the UK's energy security supply during peak demand periods.

Engagement

The Applicant has held considerable discussions with key parties such as px, PD Ports, Navigator. Weekly meetings are being held with some parties and it is the Applicant's intention to agree commercial agreements prior to the submission of the DCO application. The Applicant has also held positive discussions with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, the host Local Authority for the project.

The Applicant has contacted key statutory consultees such as Natural England, Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive. A lease from The Crown Estate (TCE) will be needed for the jetty, and the Applicant confirmed that discussions are commencing with TCE.

The Inspectorate advised of the importance of early engagement with statutory parties, to resolve any concerns as early as possible, to assist the examination in due course.

Environmental Matters

The Applicant explained that it had obtained existing environmental data from developers in the vicinity but that it was also conducting its own environmental surveys, including bird and traffic surveys. The Applicant highlighted that the site lies within a Special Protection Area and a proposed Ramsar site¹ and that the approach to Habitat Regulations Assessment was under consideration (including whether a without prejudice derogations case will be submitted with the DCO application), with a meeting with Natural England scheduled. The Applicant proposed to use existing datasets combined with its own survey data to provide two years' worth of bird survey data, if required.

The Applicant aims to submit an EIA Scoping request during the week commencing 4 March 2024, and will be seeking to scope out several topics, such as heritage, socioeconomics, population, human health, geology and soils. A GIS shapefile will be submitted to the Inspectorate in mid-February 2024, ahead of the Scoping request.

¹ The Applicant confirmed that the site is yet to be designated as a Ramsar site, but it is proceeding on the basis of a likely designation.

Key Dates

The Applicant is proposing an ambitious programme, consisting of the following key dates:

- EIA Scoping request – end of February 2024;
- Statutory Consultation – April – May 2024;
- DCO application submission – July 2024.

At present, the Applicant is unsure of whether it will pursue a draft document review, in the limited time available between the close of the statutory consultation and the DCO application submission, but is aware of the standard 6-8 week review period. This will be revisited in future meetings.

The Inspectorate acknowledged the challenging programme and advised the Applicant not to compromise quality for speed. It is important that the Applicant engages effectively with key parties prior to the submission of the application, and that it is of a satisfactory standard to be accepted for examination, under s55 of the PA2008.

The Applicant should ensure that the Inspectorate is notified of any changes to the planned timescales as a matter of urgency, to ensure resources are deployed effectively.

The Applicant enquired about possible fast tracking the application in due course. The Inspectorate advised that there is considerable work ongoing relating to NSIP reform, and there are likely to be publications shortly about how future pre-application services will look.

Actions

- Applicant to consider possible timescales for future meetings, which are likely to be at key milestones for the project (after Scoping, statutory consultation and pre- application submission). The Inspectorate requires around 4 weeks' notice of a meeting.