



## Meeting note

<b>Project name</b>	HyNet North West Hydrogen Pipeline
<b>File reference</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<b>FINAL</b>
<b>Author</b>	The Planning Inspectorate
<b>Date</b>	13 January 2022
<b>Meeting with</b>	Cadent Gas
<b>Venue</b>	Microsoft Teams
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Inception Meeting
<b>Circulation</b>	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).

### ***Introduction to the Project***

The project is phase 2 of the larger HyNet scheme for the decarbonisation of gas infrastructure, replacing gas with hydrogen. It comprises pipeline infrastructure for commission in January 2027 to transport blue hydrogen. The Inspectorate enquired about the programming of related projects including carbon capture and storage (CCS) and hydrogen development. The Applicant replied that they would be produced to parallel timescales. The Applicant discussed how consultation would provide links between associated projects to keep the public aware of the how the project would work in tandem.

### ***Proposed Development and associated development***

The phase 2 pipeline is to be a high-pressure pipeline and associated infrastructure to connect Hydrogen production to existing Cadent Gas sites at Partington and Warburton to facilitate hydrogen blending into other existing local transmission systems. The high-pressure pipeline and associated infrastructure will allow hydrogen to be transported to storage facilities. The Applicant explained that the new infrastructure is required to avoid any interruption of supply in the transition to hydrogen from natural gas.

The pipeline and above ground infrastructure would be located within six local authorities: Cheshire West, Cheshire East, Halton, Warrington, St Helens and Trafford. The pipeline could be up to 125km in length and vary in diameter from 6 to 42 inches.

The hydrogen above ground installations (AGI) could be up to 12 in number, with 2 block valves.

The Inspectorate asked when a preferred route for the South Corridor within the Scoping boundary would be decided. The Applicant replied that they would hope to have it drafted after Statutory Consultation is completed, and prior to the submission of the DCO application.

The Inspectorate asked what the typical working widths would be for the pipeline; the Applicant replied that the area would vary but would typically be between 20-50m and at a depth of 1.1-1.2m, dependent on the pipe dimensions. The Applicant said that they are discussing whether the construction will be completed in stages or all at once, this will determine the amount of construction compounds required during the construction period. The Inspectorate asked when more detail on this could be expected; the Applicant suggested it can be discussed in the Scoping Report, but more detail would be supplied in due course. The Inspectorate suggested that the more information provided on phasing the better, the Applicant said they have not committed to detailed phasing discussions yet in order to maintain as much flexibility as possible.

### ***Project Timescales***

EIA Scoping is proposed to be submitted at the end of January 2022. Statutory Consultation and Statements of Community Consultation (SoCCs) will be completed during summer 2022. The current programme is for the Development Consent Order (DCO) to be submitted in Q1 2023. The Applicant highlighted that it had commenced survey activity including for Wintering Bird and archaeology. The Inspectorate asked about the scope of archaeological surveys, stating that geophysical surveys should ideally be used to inform the need for more detailed surveys such as trial trenching and that the survey effort should be agreed with the relevant authority (e.g. county archaeologist).

### ***Approach to statutory and non-statutory consultation***

Non-Statutory Consultation is scheduled to launch in late January 2022 with a focus on route corridors, spur connections and technology. There is to be a mix of digital engagement and face to face consultation events, planned in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. There will be range of ways to engage: an interactive website, e-mail, phone and freepost. The consultation period will be 6 weeks. The Applicant answered a query from the Inspectorate about Covid-19 back up events, suggesting that more virtual events would be possible to run in place of physical events, if necessary. The Applicant explained that representatives from the [HyNet CO<sub>2</sub> Pipeline project](#) would be present at hydrogen pipeline consultation events and vice-versa.

The Inspectorate explained that where scoping and consultation activity is run in parallel there is a potential for confusion as to where to send consultation responses. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should make it clear within Non-Statutory consultation and EIA scoping who the consultation responses should be submitted to.

The Inspectorate asked if the Applicant intended on sending in any draft documents for review; the Applicant confirmed that this was being considered and updates would be provided at future meetings.

Statutory Consultation will take place in September 2022. A SOCC will be prepared and issued to Local Authorities in July. The Applicant has communicated with all the Host Authorities and will continue to meet with them on a regular basis.

The Inspectorate queried the dependency between the carbon pipeline proposals for HyNet and the hydrogen pipeline proposals. The Applicant indicated that the carbon proposals would need to precede the hydrogen proposals.

### ***Compulsory acquisition and s53 applications***

The Inspectorate queried if compulsory acquisition matters will be finalised before submission of the application. All land access will be sought on a voluntary basis in the first instance, with advance payments offered where appropriate. Payments have been benchmarked against other statutory undertakers conducting NSIP projects. It is not the Applicant's intention to use the s53 process but will instead use s172 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 if necessary.

The Land Rights Strategy for permanent rights / construction rights is being developed. The Applicant said that impact on future agricultural uses of land above of the pipeline should not be severely affected.

### ***Contacts and follow-up***

The Applicant and the Inspectorate would like to meet again after the Scoping Opinion has been issued, prior to Statutory Consultation commencing.

### ***AOB***

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to review Advice Notes 7 and 17 for further information on the Scoping process