



Meeting note

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| Project name | V Net Zero Pipeline |
| File reference | EN070008 |
| Status | Final |
| Author | The Planning Inspectorate |
| Date | 21 January 2022 |
| Meeting with | Harbour Energy |
| 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).

Proposed Development

Details of the proposed development

Harbour Energy is the largest producer of oil and gas from the North Sea with a large infrastructure model in place. The Proposed Development comprises an underground CO₂ pipeline from Immingham to the former Theddlethorpe Gas Terminal. Here there is an existing pipeline that runs offshore to the Southern North Sea V-Fields. The Applicant is currently engaging with BEIS and will potentially be looking to include this project as a track 2 project within their CCUS Cluster Sequencing Process. The Applicant confirmed that there is no clear timeline on track 2 confirmation, but this is expected around summer 2022. The scheme has an aimed operational date of 2027. The project would include the repurposing of an existing Harbour Energy operated high-capacity 120-kilometre offshore pipeline, which would not be part of the DCO application. The Applicant confirmed this development falls under Section 21 of the Planning Act 2008. New facilities like pig reception infrastructure and pig launching will be built at the former Theddlethorpe Gas Terminal. The working width for the pipeline is around 36 metres with a worse case of 50 metres. The actual pipeline diameter will be between 20 and 30 inches, the depth would be around 1.2 metres with different depths taken where necessary.

Activities to date

The Applicant confirmed that their development is not reliant on other projects in the area such as Humber Zero. Talks with existing landowners at the start of the pipeline have progressed well. The Inspectorate asked if the Development Consent Order (DCO) will be seeking power for amendment of other DCOs, the Applicant said that they would expect not. The Applicant is in discussion with stakeholders about remediating the site at Theddlethorpe. The pipeline running through the designated site is in good condition and is unlikely to require work. The Inspectorate asked for details about the existing pipeline in relation to the surrounding habitat. The Inspectorate asked if the pipeline ran through any local plan areas or residential areas. The Applicant replied that there is a solar farm application adjacent to the route. Desktop review has helped create a route that avoids environmental constraints where possible.

Consenting programme

EIA Scoping

The Applicant noted its Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping report is currently being prepared and is intended to be submitted in Spring 2022. The Inspectorate noted that the description of development in the scoping report should include details of pipeline working pressures. Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) consultation is proposed for Summer 2022, with a likely DCO submission date of Winter 2022/23. The Applicant confirmed that they will be looking at a biodiversity net-gain approach of at least 10%.

The Applicant explained that the benefit of the proposals at Theddlethorpe were that reuse of existing pipeline infrastructure would avoid impacts on the designated European sites at the coast. The Inspectorate acknowledged the potential benefits that this presented but queried whether the DCO would include powers that would enable works to be carried out to renew this section of pipeline, in which case the Applicant's EIA and Habitats Regulations Assessment would need to address the worst case permitted by the DCO.

The Inspectorate noted the current number of live NSIP cases in the Lincolnshire region and asked whether the pipeline would interact with any of these schemes. The Applicant suggested that there might be an interface between schemes and that this would be considered as part of the assessments.

Environmental Surveys

The Inspectorate queried whether s53 authorisation would be required for survey access. The Applicant stated that they were not requesting any section 53 powers at present. Wintering bird surveys were started in November 2021. The Inspectorate queried whether the Applicant had consulted Natural England about Wintering Bird Survey methodologies (including duration of surveys). The Applicant explained that they were intending to meet with Natural England to discuss this. The Inspectorate asked if the Proposed Development would cross any land functionally linked to the designated European sites on the coast, the Applicant stated that this would be the case and that the HRA documents would address this matter.

The Inspectorate queried whether offshore works that are not part of the DCO would be included in the submission, the Applicant said they are looking for a cohesive way of displaying the wider project effects but have not confirmed an approach as yet.

Stakeholder engagement to date

The Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Strategy is currently being drafted. Inception meetings with Local Planning Authorities will be hosted with Lincolnshire County Council, North Lincolnshire Council, North-East Lincolnshire Council, West Lindsey District Council, with meetings confirmed to happen before the scoping report is submitted. Early dialogue has commenced with Environment Agency, Natural England and Theddlethorpe Parish Council. A Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be agreed with Local Planning Authorities.

Consultation

The Applicant is committed to a two-stage consultation approach for the DCO, both informal and statutory, with stage 1 (informal) consultation to proceed after EIA scoping. Stage 2 consultation is currently scheduled for Autumn 2022. Public exhibitions are being planned, supported by virtual consultation events and newsletters. With regard to compulsory acquisition the Applicant is aiming to agree land rights through a voluntary process.

Other

The Inspectorate said they will send the project information template for the Applicant to fill out. The Applicant is eager to move quickly regarding the publication of the project website. The Inspectorate confirmed that the project email account will be set up when the project information template has been completed. The Inspectorate confirmed that Hefin Jones would be their main project contact until a case manager and case officer are appointed.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant to submit the shape file 10 days in advance of a scoping request.

