

**H2 Teesside Project
Development Consent Order
EN070009**

**Local Impact Report
Stockton on Tees Borough Council**

Introduction

1. This report comprises the Local Impact Report (LIR) of Stockton Borough Council (STBC).
2. The Authorities have had regard to the purpose of LIRs as set out in s.60 Planning Act 2008 (PA2008) (as amended), DCLG's Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent, and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Note 1: Local Impact Reports, in preparing this LIR.
3. The content of the LIR is a matter for the Local Authority concerned as long as it falls within the statutory definition. The Council should cover any topics they consider relevant to the impact of the proposed development on their area and should draw on existing local knowledge and experience.

Scope

4. This LIR only relates to the impact of the proposed development as it affects the administrative area of SBC. The LIR relies upon the Applicant's description of the development.
5. The extent of development which falls within the administrative boundary of Stockton Borough Council is largely the pipeline network, replacement land and construction compounds
6. The primary purpose of the LIR is to identify any potential local impacts of the proposed development.

Description of the Area

7. The LIR relies upon the Applicant's description of the site and surrounding area.

Planning Policy

8. The relevant National Policy Statements (NPSs) include the Overarching NPS for Energy (EN-1) the NPS for Natural Gas Supply Infrastructure and Gas and Oil Pipelines (EN-4), and the NPS for Electricity Networks Infrastructure (EN-5)

9. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was originally adopted in March 2012 and most recently updated in December 2023. Paragraph 5 of the NPPF sets out that the document does not contain specific policies for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) which are to be determined in accordance with the decision-making framework in the PA2008 and relevant NPSs, as well as any other matters which are relevant, which may include the NPPF.
10. The policies contained within the NPPF are expanded upon and supported by the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which is updated regularly with changes to government guidance.
11. The development plan for Stockton on Tees Borough Council is the Local Plan (adopted 30 January 2019).

Principle of Development

12. The application identifies the relevant local planning policies within the Development Plan against which the application is to be assessed.
13. The Authority is in agreement that the principle of the proposed development is supported by the relevant local planning policies within the Development Plan.

Design, Landscape and Visual Impact

14. The above ground pipeline will be routed in designated pipeline corridors with existing pipeline infrastructure. New pipelines will be installed in parallel to one side of existing pipelines where practicable, thereby reducing the visual effect. At Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park there will be a line of trees between the railway and the AGI which are left intact throughout construction, providing some visual screening of the activities north of the railway.
15. The East Billingham to Teesmouth Landscape Character Assessment has been reviewed and identifies that the open space within industrial areas contains significant wildlife value with a number of ecological designations. The open low lying, sparsely vegetated landform enables widespread views of Teesside's

industrial complex across the LCA. Parts of the Connection Corridor network lie within this LCA, including temporary construction compounds, above ground and below ground pipelines, HDD stringing sites at Cowpen Bewley (Option A) and several AGIs. As such, direct change will occur during the construction of the pipelines and AGIs due to increased activity from construction vehicles and plant, and vegetation removal and trenching within a working corridor. Direct change will also occur along or adjacent to existing road and pipeline corridors, which will limit the impression of change in these areas.

16. The report considers that due to the presence of existing large-scale industrial development and above ground pipelines within this LCA, and the type of construction activities being undertaken the Proposed Development will have limited potential to affect the overall character and perception of this LCA during the daytime and night-time context. Impacts will be over a medium geographical extent and would be temporary and reversible

17. Specific viewpoints in STBC have been identified as detailed below

Viewpoint 6 - Cowpen Bewley woodland park has assessed that magnitude of impact at construction and operation as very low and the significance of effect at negligible adverse (not significant).

Viewpoints 13 and 14 - Saltholme Wildlife Reserve and Discovery Park (RSPB) has assessed that magnitude of impact at construction and operation as very low and the significance of effect at negligible adverse (not significant).

Viewpoint 15 - Cowpen Lane has assessed that magnitude of impact at construction and operation as very low and the significance of effect at negligible adverse (not significant).

18. STBC have considered the reports and the findings of the assessment are accepted.

19. An assessment of cumulative landscape and visual effects has been undertaken and no concerns are raised regarding the LVIA conclusion for receptors within the Stockton boundary.

Cultural Heritage

20. Cowpen Bewley is a conservation area with a number of listed buildings and this area is close to the connection corridors. Two hedgerows have been identified which are of greater than 30 years of age and are likely to pre-date the enclosure acts of 1750 onwards. There are also areas of archaeological importance
21. The submissions state that there will be no likely significant effects on cultural heritage are anticipated as a consequence of construction and operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.
22. The applicant proposes mitigation measures comprising a programme of archaeological evaluation and excavation in advance of construction to ensure that the significant effect is offset to minimise residual significant effects that may occur, such that they would not be significant. The details of the evaluation and mitigation will be agreed with the LPA and Tees Archaeology and the implementation secured through a WSI and Framework CEMP.
23. Taking account of the above STBC have no objections to the proposal from a Cultural Heritage Aspect but defer to Tees Archaeology for specialist archaeology comments.

Transportation and Highways

24. The construction phase will result in temporary increases of traffic flows, including HGVs. However, the assessment concludes that these additional traffic movements will not result in any significant effects. Any abnormal loads would be timed to minimise disruption following consultation with the local authority and secured through the requirements in the DCO.

25. A construction traffic management plan will be developed.
26. Taking account of the above and subject to compliance with the CTMP being secured by condition there are no highways objections to the proposals.

Flood Risk and Drainage

27. The relevant local plan policy is ENV4 - Reducing and Mitigating Flood Risk and NPPF, Section 10 'Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change' sets out the policy context for assessing the proposals with respect to the impacts to/from flooding.
28. The connection corridors are generally within flood zone 2 and 3 meaning Hydrogen Pipeline Corridor will be at risk of flooding over the lifetime of the development. Given the nature of the proposal the exception test has been applied as the development to be located in area of lower flood risk.
29. STBC are satisfied that there are no significant effects are predicted for surface water, water resources and flood risk during the construction operation or decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

Geology, Hydrogeology, and Contaminated Land

30. The submitted report has identified the risks and identify that the Connection Corridors have the potential to cause adverse effects to the geology, hydrogeology and contaminated land in the absence of impact avoidance measures. The report notes the presence of the aquifer beneath the hydrogen corridor and soils which are high sensitivity value.
31. Most of the impacts relating to geology, hydrogeology and contaminated land that are expected to arise as a result of the Proposed Development are anticipated to occur during construction.

32. A Framework CEMP will set out how impacts upon geology, hydrogeology and contaminated land will be managed during construction. STBC have no concerns in this regard with the controls in place.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

33. The authority defers to Natural England with regards to the conclusions of the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and the proposed mitigation measures
34. To avoid impacting the designated sites or the protected species, the development has been designed to use existing pipeline corridors where possible. The Applicant has also chosen construction methods which will minimise disturbance of habitats and species.
35. Significant effects are predicted for Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park Local Wildlife Site because of impacts on the woodland caused by construction work. Replacement land has been identified as mitigation for the loss of woodland planting in the Woodland Park. The new area of woodland creation within the Replacement Land will be implemented as enhancement to the area of woodland lost within Cowpen Bewley. The Applicant has agreed to work alongside STBC to agree the layout and planting of this land and this aspect and regular meetings are ongoing in this regard
36. It is considered that the biodiversity and mitigation measures. Including the provision of a CEMP set out within the ES the aspects of work that fall within the administrative boundary of STBC area acceptable and discussions are ongoing with regards to the replacement land.

Air Quality

37. The main Air Quality effects for Stockton are likely to be experienced during the construction phase of the connection corridor.

38. Overall, the mitigation measures are considered to be proportionate and, while there may be some dust effects experienced during the construction phase. The proposed mitigation measures are adequate and proportionate.
39. The modelling of impacts at designated ecological receptors (SACs / Ramsar / SPAs and SSSIs) and other ecological sites has predicted that emissions would be unlikely to give rise to significant impacts with regard to increases in atmospheric concentrations of NOx and nutrient nitrogen and acid deposition. The EIA states that need for further assessment at all locations can therefore be screened out. STBC will defer judgement to Natural England on this matter.

Noise

40. For the noise assessment the extent of the study area has been defined to include the closest receptors/ communities in each direction from the Main Site, Construction Compounds, and Connection Corridors, and those that may be affected by changes in road traffic flows during the construction phase.
41. It is mainly the construction of the connection corridors that will affect sensitive receptors in STBC and it is considered that mitigation and adherence to a CEMP should manage these temporary effects appropriately.
42. Within the Environmental Statement the hours of work go beyond the hours that STBC normally recommend. It is standard practice within Stockton that construction works take place between of 8.00am and 6.00pm on Mondays to Fridays and between 9.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays. (There shall be no construction activity including demolition on Sundays or on Bank Holidays). It is requested that this is reduced in line with other developments which may be taking place within the administrative Borough of Stockton.

Socio-Economics and Land Use

43. The submission addresses the potential effects of the Proposed Development on employment, local businesses and the local population during the construction, operation and decommissioning phases and outlines significant

(beneficial) effects as a consequence of construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of the Proposed Development.

44. This view is supported by STBC

Major Accidents and Disasters

45. The submitted documents state that the engineering design, construction and operation of the development will incorporate appropriate standards and mitigation measures necessary to reduce the risks to an acceptable level, i.e. as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP), which is the standard expected by the Regulatory Authorities (Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Environment Agency).
46. As well as an Environmental Permit, the operational plant will be regulated by the HSE as a Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) site and based on the design of the Proposed Development and the proposed operational control measures to be applied, no significant effects have been identified.
47. STBC defer to the appropriate agencies and the Cleveland Emergency Planning unit for comment on this aspect of the scheme.

Conclusions

48. This LIR has given consideration of the potential impacts of development at the local level for Stockton on Tees Borough Council and the principle of development is supported.
49. Stockton on Tees Borough Council will continue to engage with the NSIP process and seek to work proactively with the Inspector and the applicants in connection with this project.