

Meeting note

Project name	H2Teesside Project
File reference	EN070009
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	15 November 2022
Meeting with	bp
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project 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 sensitivity reasons).

Details of the proposed development

The project consists of a new 1,200 megawatt (MW) thermal capacity blue hydrogen production facility (using natural gas) and hydrogen distribution pipelines. The CO₂ generated in the hydrogen production process will be captured onsite, transported through the Northern Endurance Partnership (NEP) infrastructure and securely stored in aquifers beneath the Southern North Sea.

The hydrogen will be distributed to customers across the Teesside region through distribution pipelines which will have a combined length of approximately 23km and a diameter of 600-800mm.

Phase 1 of the project (600 MW) is planned to be operational by 2027 with the following Phase 2 by 2029/30. Both phases will require 80 hectares of land with both temporary and permanent land acquisition needed, and will require connections for

natural gas, water, electricity, and potentially oxygen and nitrogen. It was noted that likely treated effluent would be used as process water.

The Inspectorate queried how processed water discharges would be treated during the Project's operation, with a focus on nutrient neutrality compliance. The Applicant acknowledged that nitrogen discharges to air and water would require management, stating that water balance is a key to the project design and that a separate treatment process would be needed. Additionally, the cumulative impact assessment will need to factor in the emissions of the NZT Power Project (NZT).

The Applicant is looking to reuse existing pipeline corridors on the ground where possible for the proposed pipeline network. It plans to discuss the approach with Natural England and the Environment Agency regarding where the pipelines may cross environmentally sensitive areas. The Inspectorate questioned if there would be any river crossings and if there are existing pipelines that could be utilised; the Applicant confirmed that a crossing of the River Tees will be required and this may involve new infrastructure as the capacity of existing tunnels is constrained. Technical studies are ongoing

Activities to date

In 2021 the Applicant began the site selection study and the initial engagement.

In 2022 the project team introduced the Project to landowners, to help facilitate access to for environmental surveys. The team have commenced bird surveys at the potential production facility sites and along the proposed connection corridors given the proximity to the Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA, Ramsar site and SSSI. Baseline Air Quality Monitoring Surveys are also being carried out. The Inspectorate asked the team if they had clear guidance from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) on the use of hydrogen and the safety standards; the Applicant confirmed that engagement has commenced and a meeting with HSE will take place shortly.

Consenting approach

The Applicant confirmed its understanding that as the proposed hydrogen distribution pipelines will be circa 23km in length they meet the NSIP criteria set out in the Planning Act 2008. Other elements of the Project, such as the hydrogen production facility, do not meet the NSIP criteria and thresholds. The Applicant is therefore intending to seek a s35 Direction from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for certain elements of the Project. The alternative to a s35 Direction would be to submit a DCO (Development Consent Order) application for the hydrogen pipeline distribution pipelines and separate

planning applications for the other elements. The Applicant intends to submit the s35 Direction request to BEIS in December 2022.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping

The Applicant explained that it intended to submit an EIA scoping opinion request to the Inspectorate in Q1 2023. The Inspectorate highlighted the requirements of Advice Note 7 relating to the making of a scoping request and the need to submit a shapefile 10 days in advance of a request.

The Applicant listed a number of EIA topics that it intends to scope out. The Inspectorate was unable to comment on these matters in the absence of relevant justifications or more detailed information.

Stakeholder engagement to date

The informal consultation with statutory bodies and landowners will be launched in January 2023. The Applicant explained that consultation strategy will be informed by experience on NZT . It is proposed that any informal consultation undertaken will be relatively 'light touch' taking account of the limited levels of engagement from the community on NZT and will focus primarily on the relevant local authorities, potentially affected landowners and technical consultees.

The Applicant is working toward statutory consultation in Q2 2023, and statements of community consultation will be formally discussed with relevant local authorities in February/March 2023.

The Applicant will use a range of consultation methods such as a newsletter mailed to a defined consultation mailing zone, newspaper and other notices, social media and there will be virtual and in-person consultation events.

Compulsory Acquisition and Crown land issues

The project team confirmed there are numerous HM land registry titles within the current red line boundary and a significant number of interested parties. The Project was confirmed to have Crown Land interests where the connection corridors cross the River Tees. The Applicant aims to reach voluntary agreement with affected land interests prior to the submission of any DCO application, where possible.