



Meeting note

File reference	Not applicable
Status	Final
Author	Sian Thomas
Date	11 September 2015
Meeting with	SP Manweb
Venue	Planning Inspectorate Offices, Temple Quay House
Attendees	Katherine King (Case Manager) Nicholas Coombes (Case Manager) Sian Thomas (Assistant Case Officer) David Price (EIA Manager) Jacqui Fenn (Consents Officer, National Grid) Steven Edwards (Senior Environmental Planner, SP Manweb)
Meeting objectives	SP Manweb Update Meeting
Circulation	All above.

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that under its openness policy a meeting note would be taken and published on the National Infrastructure pages of the Planning Portal website; including any advice given under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). It was also noted that any such advice would not constitute legal advice upon which the applicant (or others) could rely.

New DCO, North Shropshire Reinforcement

SP Manweb made the Inspectorate aware that a Development Consent Order (DCO) would be likely to come forward in North Shropshire as a result of the Council identifying a lack of supply to existing businesses within the locality and a lack of generation export. The price review, referred to as ED1 on SP Manweb's website reviews the 'need' for a period of seven years. The price review sets out an investment programme to give access to investment to refurbish and maintain an efficient network. SP Manweb stated that the price review has identified the 'need' for the DCO for the North Shropshire Reinforcement to come forward.

A Draft Strategic Paper has been prepared for the North Shropshire Reinforcement proposal and the Local Authority has been made aware of the proposal. SP Manweb is beginning to look at commissioning the work, and aim for consultation to take place

during 2016 and submission for 2017. The scoping is to be submitted to the Inspectorate at the end of 2016.

The Inspectorate made SP Manweb aware of a pre-application service available which is beneficial in creating a service level agreement between the Inspectorate and the Applicant. Further to this, it was explained that the Consents Service Unit (CSU) can also assist with certain permits/licenses that sit outside of the DCO. The role of the CSU is to advise Applicants and the Inspectorate; however this is not applicable to Wales due to the position of National Resources Wales (NRW.) The Inspectorate explained nevertheless that the advice offered by the CSU is still useful for projects that are crossing the border from Wales to England.

Within the meeting, the Inspectorate made SP Manweb aware of the Major Infrastructure and Environmental Unit (MIEU.) The unit is set up by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and aims to address issues with habitats regulation assessment. It is an evidence based process, and for projects such as Humber CCS the process was particularly beneficial in assisting with habitats regulations despite there being no MIEU advice sought. The aim of MIEU is to get a clear understanding of approaches, such as the basis for Statements of Common Grounds (SoCG.) The Inspectorate suggested that a good example of pre-application engagement was Triton Knoll Electrical Connection, where an evidence plan was produced and submitted with the Environmental Statement, and recommends for SP Manweb to look at the documentation submitted.

SP Manweb made the Inspectorate aware that some initial discussions had already taken place with statutory bodies such as Natural England with regard to the proposal. SP Manweb expressed their intention of setting up a planning performance agreement to assist pre-application working as it was suggested that, in theory, the Inspectorate or Examining Authority (ExA) would be able to pick up on less issues with an evidence plan and baseline agreement and it would prompt early steps being taken towards a SoCG, prior to the start of the examination.

SP Manweb set out that the current intention of the North Shropshire Reinforcement application is to arrange agreements with relevant bodies to fund participation in the application. Additional project costs would need to be looked at, such as those involved with statutory bodies such as Natural England and the Local Authority. SP Manweb queried the possibility of multi party meetings.

In response, the Inspectorate advised that prior to negotiating the Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) it would be advisable to consider the use of the MIEU service and CSU and could be beneficial to adopt an umbrella approach. The Inspectorate pointed out that often, responses can be inconsistent from parties, and therefore adopting an approach to work together would assist with achieving consistency.

SP Manweb queried whether MIEU replaces any aspects of what is undertaken as a part of consultation under a DCO application?

The Inspectorate advised that the formality of MIEU may assist with the value for money aspect when undertaking consultation on a DCO application but does not replace it. Further to this it is stated that MIEU is a free service that helps shape the work required and is an evidence based approach. The MIEU process also offers advice before any misconceptions become embedded in the project. The subject of

whether Natural Resources Wales (NRW) offer a MIEU service or whether it comes into account for outreach or inception meetings is to be discussed with the Inspectorate in the following update meetings in relation to Welsh projects.