

Meeting Note

File reference	EA Liaison
Status	Final
Author	Hannah Pratt

Meeting with	Environment Agency (EA)
Meeting date	13 February 2012
Attendees (IPC)	Sheila Twidle, Tom Carpen, Hannah Pratt
Attendees (non IPC)	Julie Foley, Carol Bolt, Duncan Mitchell
Location	EA's Offices, Horizon House, Bristol

Meeting purpose	Liaison Meeting
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Summary of outcomes	<p>1. Future of the IPC</p> <p>Under the Localism Act the IPC will be abolished on 1 April 2012 and its functions will transfer to a new national infrastructure directorate that has been created within a restructured Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The IPC explained that the case team within the national infrastructure directorate will comprise of seven sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear • transmission lines • offshore energy • onshore energy • other energy • transport • water and waste water <p>Each sector will have a dedicated leader to be a point of contact for stakeholders and to pick up on generic issues in the sector. The sector lead is also responsible for cases within the sector. The Environmental Services team will be expanding and will continue to work across all sectors and across the wider PINS.</p> <p>From 1 April 2012, the relevant Secretary of State (SoS) will be the decision maker on all national infrastructure applications for development consent. At the end of the examination of an application, which will still be completed within a maximum of six months, PINS will have 3 months to make a recommendation to the relevant SoS who will</p>
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then have a further 3 months to reach their decision.

The IPC stressed that external bodies should not see a difference in operations during the integration.

2. EA structure and function

The EA provided an overview of their organisational structure, whereby planning is undertaken on a local, area office basis so that accountability for decision making reflects geography. Planning is undertaken locally and nationally by:

- Planning and Advisory Corporate Services Teams in Operations (local, area based planning liaison officers) who respond to all development management and strategic planning enquiries)
- Sustainable Places Team in National Office (providing operational guidance to local teams, expert advice to Government departments and other national stakeholder relations)

The EA's National Permitting Team are (responsible for the majority of environmental permitting work.

The EA stated that they encourage developers to apply for an environmental permit prior to applying to the IPC for a Development Consent Order (DCO). This ideally should provide sufficient time for the EA to be at the 'minded to' stage (e.g. Draft Decision) by the time a DCO application is at examination. Given the overlap in the two regimes, the group highlighted the potential benefits of the National Permitting Team attending a future liaison meeting with the IPC.

The EA are drafting Planning and Permitting Guidance which is due to be issued in Summer 2012. The guidance aims to provide developers with the flexibility to choose to parallel track their proposals for complex sites.

The EA explained that they will shortly be piloting an Environmental Account Manager to co-ordinate relationships between the EA, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. The aim is to provide developers with a single point of contact and to ensure consistent information is shared across all bodies. The IPC noted that they are keen to know the issues which developers and consultees do and do not agree on.

The group discussed the EA's involvement in meetings during the DCO examination process. The EA has been invited to attend hearings by examining authority, however

	<p>they do not always have comments to make and the resources to attend. They queried any obligation on them to attend such hearings. The IPC stated that the EA are not obliged to attend hearings unless explicitly requested to by the examining authority.</p> <p>3. Scoping consultations</p> <p>The EA enquired as to whether there was a mechanism for the IPC to inform them of possible scoping consultations in order for them to plan resources. The IPC highlighted the indicative programme of projects available on their website but stated that this is reliant on information provided by developers. The IPC recommended that the EA asks developers to inform them (the EA) of their anticipated timescales for both scoping and Section 42 consultations during pre-application discussions.</p> <p>4. IPC Advice Note 11</p> <p>The advice note is currently being finalised and will be issued before the end of March 2012.</p> <p>5. Future of liaison meetings</p> <p>The group noted that the meetings overlap with the existing Offshore Consenting Forum and the Terrestrial Consenting Forum. As a result the frequency of the liaison meetings will be reduced, with meetings held if either party wishes to discuss further issues not related to the above forums. The group will however seek to hold a meeting with the National Permitting Team following IPC and PINS integration after 1 April 2012.</p>
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Record of any advice given	N/A
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Specific decisions/follow up required?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) IPC to confirm the status of their transparency policy post integration with PINS. 2) IPC to provide EA with contacts for section leaders within the national infrastructure directorate. 3) IPC to inform EA of a new contact for future meetings as this is likely to change post April 2012. 4) EA to extend invite of any future meetings to permitting leads. EA to provide dates for a meeting with the IPC post April 2012. 5) Both parties to arrange a date for the IPC to present
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	<p>the DCO process to permitting officers within the EA.</p> <p>6) EA to inform the IPC when the draft Planning and Permitting Guidance is published.</p> <p>7) IPC case leaders to clarify with the EA whether they have issues to raise during an examination hearing and whether they wish to attend prior to hearings.</p>
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Circulation List	All attendees
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