



Meeting note

Status	Final
Author	Kate Mignano
Date	4 March 2015
Meeting with	Network Rail
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	David Vernon Susannah Guest, David Price, Richard Hunt and Kate Mignano
Meeting objectives	Initial Meeting to discuss potential NSIP application, timeline and Pre-Application process
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised on its openness policy, that any advice given will be recorded and placed on the National Infrastructure Portal website under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 as amended (PA 2008) and also to note that any advice given under section 51 does not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) can rely.

Project Introduction

The Werrington Junction Improvement Scheme is planned for Network Rail's East Coast Mainline (ECML) which is a key rail artery connecting London, the Midlands, North Wales and Scotland providing express local, commuter and freight services. The site is an existing junction on the ECML north of Peterborough in the vicinity of Werrington. The proposal is to create a new railway chord linking the Stamford and Spalding lines, separating the freight and passenger services using these lines from the high speed passenger services on the ECML, thus helping to provide additional capacity on the ECML. The project is still in the development stage and Network Rail is considering one of the following options:

- 2 'fly over' designs (on the same alignment, but differing construction methodologies)
- 4 'dive under' designs (different construction methodologies, and slight variations in alignment)

Network Rail informed the Planning Inspectorate that both of the 'fly over' options would be approximately 3.5 km long, falling outside general permitted development, potentially making the project a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)

under PA 2008. The 'dive under' options, being approximately 1.2 km in length, would be progressed through the Transport and Works Act regime.

Consultation

Network Rail explained that public non-statutory consultation on the project had taken place in June 2014, including exhibitions and briefings that were attended by approximately 400 people. 142 written responses to the consultation were received including information regarding the preferred options and key issues.

Network Rail confirmed that they were in discussion with statutory bodies including the relevant local authority departments, the Environment Agency, National Grid and UK Power Networks as part of their non-statutory consultation.

Environmental

Network Rail confirmed that several environmental surveys had already been undertaken and that targeted species surveys for bat, badger and great-crested newt were on-going. Network Rail discussed the likely temporary environmental impacts associated with the options considered and confirmed that during construction the majority of materials would likely be brought in via road, not rail, but this would only be confirmed once the option was selected and preferred contractor identified

Timescales

Network Rail gave the following indicative timescales:

- Decision on final preferred option and determination of appropriate consenting regime – April 2015
- Single consultation phase – May 2015
- Scoping request - May 2015
- Submission of application – December 2015

Advice

The Inspectorate advised that scoping at the same time as carrying out s42 consultation can lead to confusion for consultees and strongly advise prospective applicants to avoid this approach. It was noted that Network Rail may wish to wait until a scoping opinion had been issued before progressing to s42 consultation. The list produced by the Planning Inspectorate in response to Regulation 9 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2009 could help Network Rail identify the range of consultees that they are required to consult under s42 PA 2008. The Inspectorate stressed that the list should not be relied upon for this purpose. The Inspectorate discussed options with regard to the scoping process and noted alternative approaches to a formal scoping exercise. In particular the Inspectorate noted the EIA Evidence Plan approach which can be used at Pre-Application stage to agree with consultees the appropriate level of information to inform the assessment.

The Inspectorate advised Network Rail to read through the Advice Notes, in particular Advice Note 7 and the Pre-Application Advice Service Prospectus. The Prospectus sets out in detail the service that can be provided to applicants during Pre-Application stage including the 5 key aspects:

- Knowledge and experience of the NSIP process
- Advice about making an application and the policy framework
- Review of draft application documents
- Facilitation and making the links
- A structured approach

In particular, it was explained that the Inspectorate can facilitate meetings with statutory bodies and that entering into a 'Contact Plan' with an applicant can assist in setting out a framework of support at the Pre-Application stage.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

For Network Rail to give notice as soon as practicable if the application is to be submitted as an NSIP.