



Meeting note

File reference	N/A
Status	Final
Author	Siân Evans
Date	22 September 2017
Meeting with	Statera Energy
Venue	Temple Quay House
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Richard Price (Case Manager) Siân Evans (Case Officer) David Price (EIA and Land Rights Manager) Applicant Andrew Troup (Statera Energy) Simon Johnson (Statera Energy) Julian Boswall (Burgess Salmon)
Meeting objectives	Thurrock Hybrid Power Plant project update
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

Introduction

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) case team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate outlined its openness policy and ensured those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under s51 of the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further to this, it was made clear that any advice given did not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant (or others) can rely.

Project update

The Applicant is considering how best to access the site for the purpose of construction. They are engaging with the relevant highways authority, the Port of Tilbury and Network Rail regarding potential access routes. The Applicant advised that most of the construction materials will be brought in by boat but it is not possible to construct the Proposed Development from the river, so construction materials will be offloaded and transported by road.

The Applicant is in discussion with National Grid regarding a grid connection offer and hopes this matter to be resolved shortly.

Post-meeting note dated 22 March 2018 - The Applicant has accepted a viable grid offer from National Grid and is expecting the PARCA gas offer in May. The Applicant has an agreed Statement of Common Ground with National Grid.

The Applicant advised that they are considering different sizes of gas reciprocating engines and therefore will be seeking flexibility in the Development Consent Order (DCO). The Inspectorate enquired why a decision on the size of the engines cannot be made before the application is submitted. The Applicant advised that the reason is that they would not be able to secure contracts before submission of the application. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that where certainty cannot be given and flexibility is required any assessment of environmental effects from the Proposed Development should be carried out with regard to a worst case scenario. The Applicant was also advised that the application should be sufficiently clear to understand exactly what the Applicant wants development consent for.

The Applicant stated that the site is located within the Green Belt. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to try to seek clarification from Thurrock Council in respect of possible allocations in its emerging Local Plan. The Applicant stated that it had been in discussion with Thurrock for 9 months and the green belt status of the land is likely to come under review for the new Local Plan given the housing and employment land requirements and the announcement of the East Thames Crossing. The applicant and Council intended to draw up a Statement of Common Ground. The Applicant was advised that during examination the local authority will be requested to submit a Local Impact Report which may set out how they are considering Green Belt in their emerging Local Plan.

The Applicant advised that they did not consider there to be any significant environmental effects from the Proposed Development and are therefore considering seeking a screening opinion. The Inspectorate advised that in any event screening decisions taken at the pre-application stage will need to be revisited when an application is submitted to ensure that nothing has changed that may alter this decision. If the screening decision is changed and an Environmental Statement is required (due to a change in the description of the Proposed Development or any other reason) it will need to be submitted and could have implications for the acceptance/Examination process.

The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider carefully its approach to fulfilling the requirements of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) Regulations. The Applicant and the Inspectorate discussed the general requirements in respect to environmental information and whether making the application an EIA development in accordance with Regulation 8 (1)(b) would reduce time, resources and risk of challenge.

The Applicant confirmed its intent to undertake one round of statutory consultation. The Inspectorate advised that statutory consultation cannot start before the Applicant has determined whether or not the Proposed Development is Environmental Impact Assessment development.

The Applicant advised that they are aiming for submission of the application in Q2 2018. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant that draft documents can be reviewed prior to submission but to allow up to two months for this process, depending on the number of documents.

Specific decisions / follow up required?

The Applicant to complete the necessary information required to set the project up on the Inspectorate's website.