



Meeting note

Project name	Medway 2 Low-Carbon Gas Power Station Project
File reference	EN010113
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	9 March 2020
Meeting with	SSE
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Meeting objectives	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 (if requested by the Applicant for commercial reasons), or until a formal scoping request had been submitted.

Introduction to the project

The Applicant provided an overview of the proposed project (Medway 2) which is located in North Kent. The Applicant explained the rationale behind their proposal, recognising that both the market and the approach to addressing climate change have developed since previous gas power station applications. The Applicant acknowledged that renewables represent a big part of the solution to achieving a net zero target but noted that flexibility of supply is still needed and argued that gas will still play an important role in the required transition. The Applicant stated they believe that large scale generation from gas will continue to be required.

The Applicant is fully aware of the present challenges which included the non-availability of the infrastructure for carbon capture in the commercial landscape. Therefore, the Applicant intends to move forward on the basis of a low carbon solution for the project; either the capability for Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) or firing by hydrogen.

The Applicant does not propose to prepare a standard Carbon Capture readiness (CCR) report but will look at assessing the CCS plant and including the connection corridors for the carbon or hydrogen pipelines and wider infrastructure and commercial arrangements to support the relevant low carbon pathway.

The existing Medway 1 CCGT (735MW) has been in operation since 1995 and is close to the Isle of Grain LNG terminal, with the River Medway used to cool the existing plant. There is an existing privately-owned railway and port terminal (Thamesport) nearby. The project would be for two units of up to 2GW and the low carbon pathway will be either CCS or hydrogen firing. The likely method of transport for the captured carbon dioxide would be via a shipping solution rather than a fixed pipeline. The project will be located on land owned by National Grid, subject to agreement of a lease.

The Applicant is aware that the technological solution chosen will influence the assessments required and notes that the concept design remains an issue because the emissions have not yet been fully profiled. The Applicant noted that at present there is no Best Available Technique (BAT) from the Environment Agency for the technologies being considered. Accordingly, the planned method of operation is uncertain so the Applicant would proceed on the basis of a worst case for any of the given technologies and operational scenarios considered at present.

Next steps

The Applicant is to monitor the position with regard to the development and availability of low carbon infrastructure within the Medway area and will make a decision on moving forward with work on an application at the appropriate time.

The Inspectorate reminded the Applicant of the advice contained in Advice Note 7 regarding the approach to the required notification and requests for Scoping Opinions and advised that the Applicant should consider the design principles as recommended by the National Infrastructure Commission Design Group. The Inspectorate considers that these principles should be used to guide the planning and delivery of major infrastructure projects from their conception to their completion.