



## Meeting note

### File reference

<b>Status</b>	<b>Final</b>
<b>Author</b>	Robert Ranger
<b>Date</b>	9 February 2018
<b>Meeting with</b>	Norfolk County Council
<b>Venue</b>	Temple Quay House, Bristol
<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Norfolk County Council (NCC)</b> David Allfrey (Norfolk County Council) Mark Kemp (Norfolk County Council) Mike Denny (WSP) Jon Davey (WSP)  <b>The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate)</b> Susannah Guest – Infrastructure Planning Lead Dave Price – EIA and Land Rights Manager Rob Ranger – Case Manager
<b>Meeting objectives</b>	Introduction to the project
<b>Circulation</b>	All

### Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

The Planning Inspectorate explained the duties placed upon it under section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the PA2008). A note of the meeting would be taken recording the key points discussed and any advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate. The note would be published on the Planning Inspectorate's website. Any advice issued by the Planning Inspectorate would not constitute legal advice upon which the Applicant, or others, could rely.

### Project Introduction

NCC introduced the proposed scheme. NCC is promoting a third river crossing of the River Yare in Great Yarmouth, for which Great Yarmouth Borough Council are the host authority. The Proposed Development is the subject of a request for a Section 35 direction that was made to the Secretary of State for Transport on 26 January 2018.

NCC believed that the Proposed Development should be considered as nationally significant because of its connection with the strategic road network and Great

Yarmouth port, and the contribution the port makes to nationally significant offshore wind generating projects.

The Great Yarmouth peninsula is currently served by two crossings, the A47 Breydon Bridge and the Haven Bridge, both of which are bascule bridges. The proposed third river crossing is to the south of the two existing crossings, running east to west.

The scheme was subject to initial consultation in 2009 and the route of the proposed bridge has been safeguarded. As a result, several blight notices have been served and NCC has purchased several of the properties likely to be affected by the scheme.

A second round of non-statutory consultation took place in mid-late 2017.

The current proposal is for a twin-leave bascule bridge. A degree of design-and-build flexibility has been retained, and so a swing bridge should be included within the scope at this stage. Options are also being considered for the design of pedestrian holding areas.

An Environmental Options Appraisal has been carried out, considering three bridge options, all of which refer to the bascule bridge arrangement. In response to a question from the Inspectorate, NCC confirmed that no option was significantly more harmful than any other.

NCC anticipates a third stage of consultation in July to October 2018. This would be the statutory consultation for the purpose of the 2008 Act. The Applicant proposes to submit a scoping request as soon as possible after receiving a S35 direction anticipated at the end of February. The Inspectorate advised that the Applicant should submit a GIS shapefile 10 working days prior to making any scoping request. The Inspectorate also asked that the Applicant formally notify them under Regulation 8 of the EIA regulations that the Proposed Development is considered to be EIA development.

It is currently expected that the new bridge would be owned by NCC, and operated by the port authority (currently Peel Ports). NCC is considering advance sign warning systems, which would alert motorists to the opening of the bridges. The assumption that only one bridge would be open at any time has been made in traffic modelling; the Inspectorate advised that, measures relied upon in the ES should be secured in the DCO or some other suitably robust way.

The Inspectorate also advised that, whilst the Proposed Development subject to the scoping report can contain a degree of flexibility as to the final design of the bridge, it is less likely that the Applicant will be able to scope issues out of the ES as a result, since including flexibility may result in a widened scope for the assessment.

In consultation, the Inspectorate advised that any flexibility, and any constraints, be set out transparently to consultees. It may be necessary to undertake limited further consultation once the flexible elements of the scheme have been refined. NCC confirmed that they expected to have clarity on the design of the bridge in their DCO application.

The Inspectorate advised that NCC should also be transparent about the separation of their functions as a host authority and as the scheme promotor.

The Inspectorate asked if the air quality impacts of standing traffic had been assessed. NCC confirmed that they would be accounted for in the assessment.

The scheme is in the vicinity of Southtown Common. NCC confirmed that they hope to design out any requirement for the compulsory acquisition of common land.

NCC outlined some of the scheme's environmental constraints, including the Outer Thames Estuary, Breydon Water and Great Yarmouth North Denes SPAs. The Inspectorate advised that the River Yare part of the Outer Thames pSPA should be treated as if it were an SPA. NCC noted that they would have a direct effect on the pSPA, and this would be addressed in their HRA assessment.

The Inspectorate queried whether a marine licence would be necessary for the proposed scheme. NCC confirmed that they were in discussions with the MMO and planned to include a deemed marine licence in their DCO.

NCC has used Highways Act powers to access land for surveys. The Inspectorate noted that separate powers exist to access land under the Planning Act 2008. The Inspectorate explained that applications to access land currently have a three month approximate timescale for determination, if the application is well prepared.

The Inspectorate asked if the effect of the proposal on the Strategic Road Network and wider network would be assessed. NCC confirmed that it would. The Inspectorate also noted the need to assess noise and lighting impacts.

NCC noted that the application would be accompanied by a Water Framework Directive Assessment. The Inspectorate invited any feedback on their published advice on the topic.

## **Actions**

NCC and the Inspectorate to arrange a further meeting prior to statutory consultation.

NCC to share a draft contact plan for future engagement.