



Meeting note

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| Status | Final |
| Author | Kate Mignano |
| Date | 19 March 2015 |
| Meeting with | Devon County Council |
| Venue | Temple Quay House, Bristol |
| Attendees | Stuart Langer and Ben Naylor - Devon County Council Susannah Guest, Will Spencer and Kate Mignano – The Planning Inspectorate |
| Meeting objectives | Project up-date meeting |
| Circulation | All attendees |

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

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

Project Update

Devon County Council's proposal is to reinstate the Bere Alston to Tavistock Railway and will include a new station south-west of Tavistock, alterations to an existing station at Bere Alston, provision of associated pedestrian/cycle trails and the erection of telecommunications masts to provide for railway communication protocols. It is no longer being progressed as a joint venture with Kilbride Company but solely by Devon County Council.

The aims of the project would be to improve transport links between Tavistock and Plymouth connecting Tavistock to the National Rail Network at Bere Alston, thus reducing traffic using the A386. The proposed new section of track between Bere Alston and Tavistock would be single track although the line was formerly double track.

Devon County Council provided an up-date on the scheme noting the disused section of railway line which is to be reinstated of approximately 5.5 miles long and that the track bed is largely still in place however replacement ballast and new track would be needed to reinstate the proposed railway. Original plans for a cycle route parallel to the new railway line have been deemed unsuitable due to the railway corridor being

limited in places to 6.5m wide and due to access implications. Instead, trails will be provided linking Tavistock to the surrounding area.

Devon County Council indicated that the key milestones in their current programme would be: likely submission in summer 2017, with construction in 2019/20 and the railway opening in 2021.

In 2014, West Devon Borough Council resolved to grant an outline planning permission by Bovis Homes for a 750 dwelling scheme to the south-west of Tavistock. It was envisaged that this Bovis Homes scheme would contribute funding to the Bere Alston to Tavistock Railway proposal by way of a s106 agreement. Devon County Council noted that a car park, subject of the Bovis Homes application, could be jointly used for a new railway station at Tavistock. Such a use would have implications for the phasing of development. The Planning Inspectorate suggested seeking clarity as soon as is practicable about the definition of development to be included in any Development Consent Order (DCO) application and for Devon County Council to identify any key dependencies which would not be included in a DCO or be under their control.

Network Rail was reviewing the scheme design and overall scheme costings under stage 3 of their Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process. GRIP stage 4, which finalises a single option scheme, was expected to be completed in 2016. The Planning Inspectorate noted that alterations to railway infrastructure including extensions to station platforms, upgrades and access could, in specific instances, be made by Network Rail under their permitted development rights. The Planning Inspectorate suggested that Devon County Council could seek clarification in respect of the relationship between any DCO proposals and the permitted development rights of Network Rail.

In noting PA 2008 s25, the Planning Inspectorate asked whether the railway (once constructed) would be part of a network operated by an approved operator. Devon County Council stated that the land and railway would be handed over to Network Rail (as an approved operator) when construction was complete and that discussions with Network Rail in this regard (and on implications for signalling/timetabling) are ongoing.

The Planning Inspectorate noted that in considering any other proposal for the operation of the railway, Devon County Council would require a clear justification as to why the scheme would satisfy the requirement of PA 2008 s25 in being considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

Devon County Council explained that the associated cycle/footpath trails would provide access to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the World Heritage site linking south west Tavistock to the Tamar Trails Centre. In noting PA 2008 s115, the Planning Inspectorate asked about the direct relationship between development for which a DCO is required and any associated development. Devon County Council considered the trails to be associated development in accordance with PA 2008 and were seeking to include them within any DCO application.

The Planning Inspectorate advised that it would be for Devon County Council to seek their own legal advice on points relating to the scheme definition and description and its relationship with the requirements of PA 2008, sections 25 and 115 in particular.

Devon County Council explained that some initial ecological assessments have taken place including: bat surveys; mine surveys and structural surveys of cuttings, embankments, and bridges. They suggested that the Environmental Impact Assessment was due to be completed in early 2016. In response to a query, the Planning Inspectorate considered that Transport Assessments could sensibly be appended to an Environmental Statement. It was also noted that an Environmental Statement did not necessarily have to have separate chapters for each topic/sub-topic; topics could be grouped together with clear signposting throughout the documentation.

The Planning Inspectorate advised that the form of the 'letter of no impediment' was changing and encouraged Devon County Council to contact the Consents Service Unit.

Devon County Council were advised to read the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Notes, in particular Advice Note 3, 7, 10, 11 and 14 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
- A structured approach

Specific decisions / follow up required?

Devon County Council asked whether any other DCO applications have included trails as associated development.

Devon County Council asked about the compensation mechanism for statutory nuisance and sought advice on how they could report on this.