



Meeting note

Project name	Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation
File reference	WW010003
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	22 January 2021
Meeting with	Anglian Water
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project update 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.

Project Update

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that the informal consultation regarding the site area options had been completed. It had been extended beyond the six weeks that were planned at the request of ward and parish councillors who were unable to meet due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Applicant received an influx of responses during the extension period.

The Applicant explained that engagement has been undertaken with technical and environmental stakeholders to help form the vision and design principles along with engagement with the Design Council.

The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it had received a direction under Section 35 of the PA2008 due to the wider socio-economic contribution that the project is expected to make. The Applicant agreed to send a copy of the direction to the Inspectorate.

Programme Update

The Applicant advised that it had been working in partnership with the Local Authorities around their local plan processes. The "Consultation 2" (statutory consultation under s42 and s47 of the PA2008) has also been moved due to cancelled local elections from last year being moved to May 2021. "Consultation 2" will therefore take place after these elections have taken place. "Consultation 3" will be further statutory consultation under s42 and s47 of the PA2008 beginning in early 2022. The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) will be available for "Consultation 3" and will be available to the community as a non-technical summary version.

The DCO submission is now intended for Q3 2022.

As the development is not listed in the National Environment Programme referred to in the Waste Water National Policy Statement (NPS), the Applicant advised the Inspectorate it's need case will be established through the Local Plan identifying the site of the existing Cambridge waste water treatment works as a housing allocation. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that the Local Plan is developing on schedule, but the current timetable is dependant on local elections taking place in May 2021.

The Applicant was advised that the distinction between statutory and non-statutory consultation needs to be clear to avoid confusion. Clear explanations will be needed around what environmental information is provided as part of the statutory "Consultation 2" where the full PEIR is to be provided in the subsequent "Consultation 3".

Site announcement

The final stage of the site selection process had been completed, and a decision made. The site announcement is scheduled for the week commencing 25 January 2021. The Applicant advised that a full technical report and a non-technical summary will be published alongside the site announcement.

A site announcement document will be mailed out to the core consultation area of 14,500 properties. The announcement will also be communicated by social media, the dedicated project website, and local media. Copies will be available for request for those living outside of the core consultation area. Additionally, a webinar will be held for members of the local ward and parish councillors along with key political and stakeholder briefings to give updates. A community webinar will also be held.

Design Principles

The Applicant advised that these were at an early stage and it had been receiving input and feedback on them. The design principles include minimising the footprint of the plant compared to the existing site, minimising odour, responding to the needs and aspirations of the local community and stakeholders as well as the Applicant's own corporate objectives, delivering environmental and landscape enhancements and "net zero" / carbon neutrality.

The Applicant had received feedback from the Local Authorities to advise that it should not only take inspiration from the current landscape but also look back at how the landscape had previously looked.

The Applicant advised that it had been exploring options for access into the plant. It advised that it had been in discussion with Highways England who had indicated their preference for minimal disruption in terms of new accesses to / from the A14 as the road has only recently been modified. A bridge was available to access the site from the south of the site, which was used by pedestrians and cyclists however, enhancement would be required to make this suitable for vehicles and pedestrians.

Consultation

The Applicant advised that consultation to date has been undertaken through digital and non-digital channels. Information was published on social media along with the dedicated project website. A virtual exhibition was created and accessed over 1,700

times. A digital engagement platform was also created for people to submit their feedback.

The Applicant said the next phase of community consultation would run for a minimum period of 6 weeks, would be statutory and would be run both digitally and in person however this balance will be determined closer to the scheduled consultation period (June 2021). The phase 3 of consultation would also be statutory and would be run in parallel to the consultation with statutory stakeholders in Q1 2022.

The Inspectorate informed the Applicant that the temporary regulations regarding changes to certain publicity requirements that were published last year have now been made permanent and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had released guidance¹ regarding this which the Inspectorate referred the Applicant to and was also encouraged to look at projects that have recently come in and that are expected to come in between now and the DCO submission to help inform its approach.

Technical Stakeholder feedback

Engagement had begun with technical stakeholders including The Environment Agency, National Trust, Natural England, Cambridge County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough combined authority.

The Inspectorate enquired as to how the Shared Planning Authority have set the project out within their own authorities to ensure that the correct departments are dealing with each of the aspects. It will be vital that each of the authorities are looking at this from their separate views as this will be important when the application comes for submission. For example, if the authorities are required to gain sign off on certain decisions this may delay its ability to participate to a scheduled programme.

Net Zero Carbon Policy

The Applicant explained that the company has a target to become Carbon Neutral by 2030. The company's Net zero Carbon policy is influencing the design, EIA process and the thinking and consultation work.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping

The Applicant advised that it has been preparing the EIA Scoping report which would be largely influenced and informed by the site selection work which had already taken place. A second technical working group will take place once the Secretary of State's scoping opinion has been adopted and published in order to refine any issue that may arise in the opinion.

The scoping report is being created according to the required guidance and regulations. The Applicant stated that it would like to receive more information on the possibility / acceptability of innovative approaches to EIA taking advantage of digital techniques and principles. The Inspectorate advised that various work is taking place across Government departments including "Project Speed" and other planning reform workstreams under the "Planning for the future" white paper. The Inspectorate suggested that a further meeting could be held regarding digital EIA approaches that the Applicant is exploring.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-procedural-requirements-for-major-infrastructure-projects>

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- Applicant to send the s35 Direction to the Inspectorate.
- Applicant to send the Inspectorate grid references for the chosen site for use on the website.
- Applicant to submit presentation slides.
- Applicant to send through a guide for meetings with the Inspectorate
- The Inspectorate to investigate digital EIA scoping and arrange a meeting with the Applicant to discuss.
- The Inspectorate to set up a project mailbox.