



Meeting note

File reference	EN010091 Drax Re-power
Status	Final
Author	Ewa Sherman
Date	12 September 2017
Meeting with	Drax Power Ltd
Venue	Temple Quay House, Bristol
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate: Chris White (Infrastructure Planning Lead) Kay Sully (Case Manager) Ewa Sherman (Case Officer) K-J Johansson (Case Officer) Hannah Pratt (Senior EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Emma Cottam (EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Drax Re-Power Jim Doyle (Drax) Richard Griffiths (Pinsent Masons) Clare Hennessey (WSP) Oliver Baybut (Drax) Jenny Blyth (Drax)
Meeting objectives	Inception meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given:

Welcome and Introductions

The Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) team introduced themselves and their respective roles. The Inspectorate outlined its openness policy and ensured that those present understood that any issues discussed and advice given would be recorded and placed on the Inspectorate's website under section 51 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.

Proposed development

The Applicant is proposing to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the repowering of the existing remaining coal fired Units 5 and 6 at Drax Power Station, Selby, to become gas-powered generating plant. The project would include the re-use of elements of the coal fired units (such as steam turbine, cooling system and some other auxiliary systems) and the installation of up to two new gas turbines and up to

two Heat Recovery Steam Generators (HRSGs) per unit. Two potential arrangements are currently under consideration by the Applicant for the proposed gas turbines, which would result in differing outputs, however the maximum combined capacity of the two repowered units would be up to 3,600MW. A stack height of approximately 70m is envisaged, but the Applicant explained that this would be subject to dispersion modelling. The Applicant explained that any assessment work would be undertaken assuming a worst case scenario of the highest electrical output and stack height.

The project would also include:

- installation of battery storage of up to 200MW, with a building height of approximately 8 metres;
- modifications to the National Grid 400kV substation on site to accommodate 1 or 2 new connections;
- the relocation of the existing contractor's compounds and car park, learning centre and the Turbine Outage Stores and station ash lagoons; and
- demolition of some of the existing facilities.

All power development would be completely within the curtilage of the existing power station. No new access routes or off-site facilities are envisaged.

The Applicant would potentially use an existing jetty on the River Ouse, located approximately one mile from the site, during the construction period. A temporary crane would be used to bring large loads to the site. The Inspectorate enquired whether a Deemed Marine Licence would be included in the DCO. The Applicant stated that as the crane would be located off the existing jetty and on land, there is no requirement for the licence. Nevertheless, the Inspectorate advised that it would likely consult the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) on the scoping report on a precautionary basis, due to the proximity of works to the marine licensable area.

A gas pipeline of approximately 600mm diameter and 3.5km length would be required to connect the power station to the national transmission system. For scoping purposes two pipeline options are currently being considered, following initial discussions with National Grid and consideration of six different alignments in terms of constructability and physical and environmental constraints. Both options (routes 4 and 5) will avoid a Scheduled Ancient Monument and crossing the River Ouse. Some local landowners have been already contacted regarding access to their land. The Inspectorate advised that it is preferable to have a single option for scoping as this will likely result in more meaningful comments from consultation bodies; however, confirmed that it is still possible to scope with two options.

The Applicant explained that it is its preference to include the gas pipeline within the DCO application; however, if this is not possible, it may apply for separate consent under the Town and Country Planning Act regime as the gas connection is classed as "associated development". The Applicant confirmed that if this was the case, the cumulative effects of the gas pipeline would be considered within the DCO application.

The Applicant confirmed that land for all generating works is within Drax ownership; however, the land for the gas pipeline is outside Drax ownership. Accordingly, compulsory acquisition will be sought in the application.

Environmental setting

The Applicant provided information regarding the environmental considerations for the proposed development. Historic land use – former agricultural land; low-lying at a similar elevation to the existing power station which opened in 1975. The noise baseline is dominated by the existing Drax power station and influenced by nearby traffic and farming. Air quality is also influenced by these sources, and additionally by Eggborough Power Station and the Ferrybridge Energy from Waste plant, under construction. The Applicant is aware of the potential for air quality impacts from the proposed development, both alone and in-combination with existing developments. Overall, the application site is located within an industrial landscape.

The Applicant gave an update in relation to the environmental scoping and baseline surveys, such as Phase One Habitat Survey, on-site bat surveys and ecology surveys, and a consideration of the mitigation that may be offered. The ecological survey programme addresses seasonal constraints; however, the work is progressing as planned and the anticipated completion is before the DCO application. The Applicant explained that if any ecological surveys are not complete by the time of application, it intends to include a requirement for any remaining surveys to be completed before construction can commence (to the extent that they are not ready during the examination). The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to agree this approach with relevant parties e.g. Natural England (NE).

Additionally, a screening assessment will be undertaken for potential air quality impacts on European sites associated with the operational emissions.

The Applicant has engaged with the Local Authorities (LAs) regarding identifying zones of theoretical visibility and view points, and is setting up meetings with NE and the Environment Agency (EA). The Applicant explained it intends to vary the existing Environmental Permit for the site rather than apply for a new permit.

The EIA Scoping Report is due to be submitted to the Inspectorate in September 2017. The Inspectorate advised that if there are any issues being scoped out, then the Applicant will need to provide a robust justification for the reasons to do so. The Inspectorate also recommended that the Applicant avoid, where possible, any overlap of their informal consultation with the Secretary of State's scoping consultation.

Provision of a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) is scheduled for January 2018 and will coincide with the statutory consultation. Consultation feedback will be addressed in the Environmental Statement.

Consultation

In August 2017 the Applicant held an introductory meeting with Selby District Council (SDC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC), and has been engaging with the regulators as part of the EIA/PEIR preparation. It also planned to hold early discussions with the Parish Councils and landowners, and proposes to issue letters to the Parish Councils and other stakeholders introducing the project. The Inspectorate requested that any such correspondence is not issued during the scoping consultation period as this has the potential to result in confusion for recipients. If the Applicant does intend to correspond with these bodies at this time, the Inspectorate stressed the importance of emphasising the difference between the two pieces of communication to avoid any confusion.

Practical arrangements

The Applicant provided their consultation programme, including provisional timings for requesting a scoping opinion, starting consultation on a draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), statutory (s42) consultation in January 2018 and submission of the DCO application in Q2 of 2018. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to consider allowing time for a review of the draft documents. A full review of a suite of draft documents by the Inspectorate takes about 6 to 8 weeks, but this depends on the number of documents and the particular issues raised. The Applicant confirmed their intention to use this service.

Regarding the post-submission programme, the Inspectorate confirmed that although timescales are fixed (apart from the pre-examination stage), the pre-application stage of the project development is essential in the smooth running of the process. It will be essential for the Applicant to undertake effective consultation and for the application to be fit for purpose with no major changes required post-acceptance.

The Inspectorate advised that a new advice note ([Advice Note eighteen: The Water Framework Directive](#)) has recently been published on the Inspectorate's website. It also explained that it intends to publish a revised version of Advice Note seven (Environmental Impact Assessment: Preliminary Environmental Information, Screening and Scoping) at the end of October 2017; this will include standard advice for the presentation of Environmental Statements that will not be included within the scoping opinion.

The Applicant confirmed that their project website is due to go live imminently.

Specific decisions / follow up required

The next meeting will be arranged for shortly after the scoping opinion is adopted in late October 2017 / early November 2017.