



Meeting note

Project name	Chesterfield to Willington
File reference	EN0210001
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	17 April 2024
Meeting with	National Grid Electricity Transmission (The Applicant)
Venue	Microsoft Teams
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, or until a formal scoping request had been submitted (if requested by an Applicant for commercial/confidentiality/sensitivity reasons).

Details of the proposed development

The Applicant is proposing a new high voltage (400kv) overhead electricity transmission line, some 60-65km in length, between a new substation in Chesterfield (which will be delivered by a separate scheme) and the existing Willington substation in Derbyshire. The project will also seek to divert/rationalise the existing 132kv lines in the area.

The Applicant stated that the existing network in Derbyshire needs significant reinforcements to accommodate increased volumes of generation capacity.

The Applicant stated that it is developing several other projects in the region including North Humber to High Marnham, Brinsworth to High Marnham, and West Burton to Ratcliffe-on-Soar / Cottam to Staythorpe. The Inspectorate noted that North Humber to High Marnham was a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and asked about the consenting regimes. The Applicant confirmed that the other projects would follow the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 consenting regime.

Activities to date

The Applicant stated that it has completed its Strategic Assessment and is now at the stage of Options Identification and Selection, which has so far identified several ecological

designations, landscape features, heritage designations and built-up areas. The Applicant is now drafting the Corridor Preliminary Routeing and Siting Study (CPRSS).

The Inspectorate asked whether changes to the consideration of impact on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now National Landscapes) as set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and distance from National Parks had been considered in the CPRSS. The Applicant confirmed that they had. The Inspectorate asked if there were any underground elements to the project. The Applicant responded that most of the line will be above ground, with some underground elements near the substations.

Consenting programme

The Applicant gave an outline of the key milestones in its provisional timetable for the Proposed Development, with routeing and siting beginning in May 2023 and construction completion due for May 2031. Non-statutory consultation will take place between 14 May 2024 and 9 July 2024. A request for an EIA Scoping Opinion is likely to be made in September 2024. Statutory Consultation is currently planned for September to November 2025, with the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application likely to be in November 2026. The Applicant is likely to seek a draft document review from the Inspectorate in due course.

The Inspectorate asked whether a targeted consultation was likely to take place during the period between the statutory consultation and the submission of the DCO application. The Applicant confirmed that sufficient time had been allocated to enable this, should it be deemed necessary. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure that surveys did not become outdated during this period.

Environmental surveys

The Applicant gave an outline of their schedule for carrying out environmental surveys, which will run from April 2024 – October 2025. The Applicant does not currently foresee difficulties with access to land, but this will be monitored. It was noted that to enable design flexibility at this stage, the Scoping Report was likely to include the substation as part of the Proposed Development, acknowledging that this could be removed prior to the submission of the DCO application.

Stakeholder engagement to date

The Applicant stated that it had conducted introductory meetings with some Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) as well as high level engagement with Natural England MPs, and Councillors. Planning Performance Agreements will be prepared and discussed with LPAs in due course. Further high level engagement is expected with Historic England, Environment Agency, developers of other schemes and other Affected Parties throughout the non-statutory consultation.

Consultation

The Applicant stated that non-statutory consultation will run from 14 May – 9 July 2024, which will include 9 live events and 7 webinars. The Inspectorate asked whether there

would be a mixture of times for the different sessions, including the afternoon, evening and weekends.

Compulsory Acquisition (CA)

The Applicant stated that it is following its Land Rights Strategy, which is consistent across all of their projects. This consists of securing land rights on a voluntary basis, where possible, enabling consistency in payments and treating landowners fairly and equally. However, the DCO is likely to include CA powers if negotiations aren't successful.