

Development Control Committee
Meeting to be held on the 18 January 2017

Electoral Division affected: <u>Heysham</u>
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North West Coast Connections Project: Proposed Route Alignment Stage

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Executive Summary

The County Council's interim response to a consultation by National Grid on its North West Coast Connections project, a nationally significant infrastructure project, linking the proposed new nuclear power station at Moorside in Cumbria to the national distribution network in Carlisle and in Heysham.

Recommendation – Summary

To note the County Council's interim response to the consultation and the concerns raised by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services.

Background

The North West Coast Connections project (NWCC) is a nationally significant infrastructure project proposed by National Grid. It consists of 4 new 400kv transmission circuits (a series of power lines carried on a run of new pylons or underground) linking the proposed new nuclear power station at Moorside in Cumbria to the national distribution network in Carlisle and in Heysham. In Lancashire the project will consist of a tunnel carrying the cables under Morecambe Bay, a tunnel head building with cooling fans, and a substation extension.

The proposal is for this to be constructed over several years, expected to start in 2019. Construction will consist of the sinking of two tunnel heads, one on land north of Middleton and a smaller one just off Penrod Way, and the boring of a tunnel under Heysham and Morecambe Bay, together with the construction of an islet in the middle of Morecambe Bay. The tunnel head site at Middleton is likely to see a significant level of construction works and vehicle movements, albeit for a temporary period of time.

Under Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) National Grid is required to

consult with local authorities on their proposal before they submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate. National Grid is also consulting with the public and land owners at this stage, under Section 47 of the Act.

On the 5 January 2017, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services considered a report setting out the County Council's interim response to the North West Coast Connections consultation. A copy of the report is available to view via the following link:

<http://council.lancashire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=9594>

The Cabinet Member approved the recommendations set out in the report but in doing so, raised the following concerns:

- Insufficient attention has been given to construction and operational design at the tunnel heads to ensure impacts can be sufficiently mitigated particularly given that construction work may last up to six years.
- No meaningful mitigation is proposed to address noise, vibration, air quality, light, ecology or residential amenity impacts at the tunnel head;
- Residential/school receptors should be classed as 'high' sensitivity for a range of impacts. This has not been accepted in the submitted assessments and impacts on all the predictions and outcomes;
- There is incomplete workforce planning and accommodation proposals at the tunnel-heads;
- The level of construction materials and tunnel spoil generated will place extensive pressure on existing transport infrastructure. A multi-modal option is the only acceptable solution.

Cabinet Member decisions are not usually reported to the Development Control Committee; however, as this is a nationally significant infrastructure project, it is felt appropriate to do so. It is also considered appropriate to highlight the concerns raised by the Cabinet Member which also reflect those raised by the Council's Officers.

This consultation ran from 28 October 2016 to 6 January 2017.

Consultations

A bite size briefing for County Councillors was held on 3 November 2016 where National Grid briefed County Councillors on the North West Coast Connections project. Several points were raised by County Councillors on skills training and the use of local contractors. These points have been incorporated into initial officer feedback, and will be incorporated into the final response.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

N/A

Financial

There are no financial risks associated with this proposal.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
North West Coast Connections Project: Proposed Route Alignment Stage	8 December 2016	Richard Sharples (01772 534294
PPA Group Authorities Technical Appraisal response	5 December 2016	Richard Sharples (01772 534294)
North West Coast Connections Project: Stage 2 Consultation on Outline Route Corridors/Substation Siting	5 November 2014	Phil Megson (01772) 534162

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A