

Meaford Energy Centre

Consultation Plan

September 2013

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This document summarises the proposed approach to consulting statutory and non-statutory stakeholders around Meaford Energy Limited's (MEL) proposals for a 299 megawatt (MWe) power station, and its electrical and gas connections. The proposed site is on Meaford Business Park, near Stone in Staffordshire.
- 1.1.2 The project is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. As such, MEL will apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to grant permission to build the power station. Before submitting a DCO application, MEL will first consult the local community and other statutory stakeholders in two stages: a Non-Statutory Informal stage followed by a later, Statutory Formal consultation as set out in relevant legislation.
- 1.1.3 This document briefly introduces the project, sets out the planning regime under which the DCO will be sought and explains how the community will be consulted.

1.2 Meaford Energy Limited

- 1.2.1 MEL is a joint venture partnership between St. Modwen, one of the UK's leading regeneration specialists who are the owners of the site known as Meaford Business Park and Glenfinnan, a property investment and development company with extensive energy sector experience. The partnership is currently progressing a number of power generation projects across the UK.

1.3 Why Meaford Business Park?

- 1.3.1 Meaford Business Park has a long history of energy generation, having previously been the site of Meaford A and B power stations, which were coal-fired and had a combined capacity of 360MWe.
- 1.3.2 Meaford A was operating from 1948 and Meaford B began operating in 1957. The power stations stopped generation in 1990 and demolition commenced in 1991 and was completed in 1996.
- 1.3.3 St. Modwen presently owns the site, which has planning consent for 1,200,000 sqft of B1, B2 and B8 employment use. Redevelopment of the site has been hindered by the economic climate and the high cost of infrastructure needed to develop the site. However, the site is considered to be a suitable location for a new combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power station (a gas-fired power station) because:

- There is a precedent for power generation set by the site's history.
- There is capacity to connect to existing electricity and gas transmission infrastructure.
- The site is brownfield land specifically earmarked in the emerging Local Plan for industrial use development and there is an existing planning consent for a 1,200,000 sqft business park development.
- There is a gap in terms of energy production in the area.
- A gas-fired power station will act as catalyst for the regeneration of the site.

1.3.4 The nearest settlement to the site is Meaford, a hamlet adjacent to the A34. Meaford Business Park site is bounded by Meaford Road and railway lines and the Trent and Mersey Canal, which is located on the site's eastern boundary.

1.3.5 Meaford Business Park comprises 85 acres (34 hectares). It is anticipated that up to 30 acres would be required to accommodate the proposed gas-fired power station.

1.3.6 The development of a gas-fired power station on the site would provide the necessary infrastructure to develop out the remainder of the site. There are significant synergies to be gained from locating the new power station on to the proposed business park development.

1.3.7 The majority of the site now contains cleared ground and piles of demolition rubble bounded by mature landscaping. Electrical distribution infrastructure, however, remains in place, which includes two substations and associated overhead transmission lines.

1.3.8 This project is comprised of two distinct but linked elements:

- The gas-fired power station, including its integrated gas connection
- its electrical connection.

1.4 The Power Station and its Electrical Connection

1.4.1 MEL will be seeking consent for a CCGT power station with a capacity of up to 299MWe at Meaford Business Park.

1.4.2 CCGT technology uses two processes to generate electricity, firstly by combusting gas and compressed air in a turbine to spin a generator and secondly by harnessing the heat generated by this process to generate steam that is fed into a steam turbine to spin a second generator.

- 1.4.3 The electricity generated by the power station would be supplied to Western Power Distribution, the distribution network operator, as an embedded connection. This would reduce the amount of electricity imported into the area from National Grid's national electricity transmission network, thus enhancing energy security for Meaford Business Park and the wider area. At this stage it is anticipated that a connection to the electricity distribution system would be created on site, using existing infrastructure.
- 1.4.4 Modern CCGT power stations have been identified in government policy as playing a crucial role in the UK's energy mix. They will support renewables by providing an 'on demand' source of electricity that is not dependant on climatic conditions. They will provide energy security in response to growing demand for power across the country, which also faces required closure of older power stations that no longer meet EU emissions regulations or have reached the end of their economic life.
- 1.5 The Gas Connection and its Route
- 1.5.1 The power station requires a connection to the local or national gas transmission network. This network is owned, maintained and operated across the UK by National Grid.
- 1.5.2 The gas connection will be an underground pipeline and the consultation process will consider options for the route of this pipeline.
- 1.5.3 There are two current options for sourcing the gas needed to fuel the power station.
- 1.5.4 The first option is to link into an existing Local Transmission System (LTS) pipeline running from Aspley to Barlaston, which is approximately 700 metres north of the Meaford Business Park site.
- 1.5.5 The second option is to create a 700-metre connection to the LTS network to the east of Meaford Business Park. MEL is still awaiting final confirmation from National Grid on the feasibility of this connection. However, at the time of writing we plan to consult around this option.
- 1.5.6 MEL has identified a corridor within which either gas connection option could be made. A corridor represents a study area in which infrastructure could be located. A plan showing the Meaford Business Park and the gas connection corridor is provided in Appendix 1.

2 Determining the Application

2.1 The Role of the Planning Inspectorate

- 2.1.1 The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is responsible for managing the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIPs support the national economy and vital services. The Planning Act 2008 sets out which types of projects constitute NSIPs. In this instance the proposed power station has a generating capacity of over 50MWe, making it an NSIP. PINS assumed this role from the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) on 1 April 2012, under provisions made in the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.1.2 PINS accepts and examines DCO applications but it does not grant consent. Consent is granted by the relevant Secretary of State, who makes a decision based on a recommendation from PINS. In this case the relevant Secretary of State is the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change (NB: Currently, responsibility for making final decisions on relevant DCO applications has been delegated by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to the Minister for Climate Change).
- 2.1.3 The role of PINS and the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change will be made clear in MEL's consultation. The following details will be explained in relevant materials:
- PINS is the body responsible for receiving DCO applications.
 - PINS advises the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change on whether to grant or refuse a Development Consent Order.
 - PINS will determine whether MEL has met the criteria set out in the relevant National Policy Statements. In this case the relevant statements are EN-1, EN-2 and EN-4.
 - While the application will ultimately be determined by the Secretary of State, acting on recommendations supplied by PINS. However, Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council and local stakeholders remain central to the process and their views and input, through consultation, can significantly influence the final prospects.

3 Consulting on the Meaford Energy Centre proposals

3.1 Consultation and the Planning Acts

3.1.1 MEL's consultation is governed by a thorough legislative framework:

- Sections 42 and 47 of the Planning Act 2008 set out how the community and other statutory stakeholders should be consulted on the proposals. The relevant sections of the Act can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/wbRJFw>.
- The Localism Act 2011 places an emphasis on local decision-making in other planning areas but not major infrastructure projects, however, MEL's consultation is structured to account for this by allowing the community to have its say and demonstrate how its feedback has been taken into account. The Localism Act can be viewed here: <http://bit.ly/spSFvE>.

3.1.2 MEL's objective is to ensure that it consults within this framework and engages with stakeholders at all tiers of the planning system and community.

3.2 Consultation Approach

3.2.1 MEL is committed to undertaking a transparent and open consultation in which the views and comments of consultees will contribute to the evolution of its proposal. The consultation will be structured so that consultees can continue to submit feedback to the team from the launch of the consultation to the submission of the DCO application in late 2014. However, the consultation will include two distinct phases in which feedback on specific project details will be sought:

- Non-Statutory Informal consultation, as set out in this document.
- Statutory Formal consultation, which will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant legal requirements.

3.2.2 At all stages of consultation MEL will make every effort to address queries from the public and provide a robust justification for why it has taken certain actions or decisions.

3.3 Non-Statutory Informal Consultation – 24 September 2013 – 1 November 2013

3.3.1 The Non-Statutory Informal stage will focus on the entire scope of the application and introduce the proposals. MEL will seek to provide consultees with enough relevant information to make well-informed comments on the proposals at this early stage. The consultation will

provide multiple opportunities to participate for all interested parties and will show how feedback has been taken into account.

3.4 Statutory Formal Consultation – early summer 2014

3.4.1 The formal consultation will be undertaken as set out in relevant legislation. The scale and scope of this consultation will be set out in a formally published Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). The SoCC will be produced in consultation with Stafford Borough Council and will be informed by our previous consultations. The formal stage consultation will focus on the detail of the final proposals and demonstrate how feedback from the previous stage has been taken into account. During this stage we will also formally consult on detailed environmental information related to the proposals.

3.5 Consulting Over a Wide Area

3.5.1 At both stages, the consultation will account for the individual towns and communities living in the vicinity of the proposed power station site and the proposed gas connection route(s). MEL will define a set consultation area that will comprise a zone around the proposed infrastructure.

3.5.2 The core consultation zone will cover the power station site and the proposed gas connection route(s) and will be agreed with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council. Multiple methods of communication will be used to inform consultees living within this zone. This holistic approach will ensure that the consultation is not overly reliant on a single method of communication. For example, project leaflets will be distributed to those living in the core consultation zone, posters will be displayed, letters will be sent to councillors and parishes and advertising will be placed in a local newspaper(s).

3.5.3 Members of the community who may not be affected by the proposals or live outside the core consultation zone may still express an interest in the proposals. These potential stakeholders will primarily be informed of the proposals through advertising and contact via civic/community groups such as residents' associations and elected representatives such as councillors.

3.5.4 Our aim is to reach the whole community (please see the accompanying consultation zone map and matrix of key consultees) and there are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. The multiple methods of communicating with the community and stakeholders will include but not be limited to:

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- A **consultation website (www.meaford-energy.com)** will serve as the primary and most up-to-date source of information for stakeholders. All supporting project documents will be made available through this website, including an indicative timeline for the consultation process, application determination, construction and completion.
- **Project leaflets** will be circulated at each stage of consultation and at the submission of the DCO application to PINS:
 - At the Non-Statutory Informal consultation stage, the leaflet will introduce the project and seek feedback on the initial concepts produced by MEL.
 - At the Statutory Formal consultation stage, the leaflet will detail the final proposed scheme and highlight that consultation is being undertaken under formally set out guidance and invite further comments.
- **Public exhibitions** – during each stage of consultation, fully staffed events will be held at accessible venues to villages located close to the power station site and proposed gas connection route(s). Members of the community will be able to have their say on the proposals and ask questions of the project team. While each event will include comprehensive information on the entire project, events will also be tailored to ensure that they meet local requirements – i.e.; some events may be tailored to specific elements of the proposals such as emphasis on a particular element of infrastructure.
- **Presentations** to Parish Councils and other community groups will be offered and, if requested, presentations shall be given to other civic or amenity groups during the consultation period.
- **Meetings** with local councillors and the MP representing the area affected by the proposals will also be held.
- **Hard to reach groups** – it may be necessary to communicate, in a slightly different way, the details of the project and its consultation to hard to reach groups in the Barlaston, Stone and Stafford area such as those who may not speak English or may be mobility, visually or hearing impaired.
- **A Stakeholder group**, if deemed beneficial, will be set up by MEL. The purpose of this group will be to comment on and guide the consultation process to ensure that all stakeholders have appropriate opportunities to give feedback.

Advertising the Consultation

3.5.5 At the Statutory Formal consultation stage, the SoCC and DCO application will be advertised in accordance with the relevant sections of the Planning Act 2008. However, at all stages, MEL will publish advertisements in local newspapers as well as issuing press releases at project milestones. If necessary, reminder adverts for exhibition events shall also be placed in the same newspapers.

3.6 Feedback

3.6.1 The community will be provided with a number of ways in which it can submit its feedback throughout the consultation, including:

- A Freepost address for written responses.
- A Freephone project information line (0800 319 6185) staffed between working hours.
- A project email address (info@Meaford-Energy.com).
- Hard copy feedback forms available at exhibition events.
- An online comment form.

3.6.2 Recording feedback is critical as PINS expects evidence to support the final consultation report. Therefore:

- Logs of all phone calls will be kept, summarising the detail of the query, caller name, date and time of call and the resultant response/action.
- Emails and written submissions will be stored, in the case of written submissions, they will be scanned to create a backup.
- Logs of the number of attendees at exhibition events and stakeholder groups will be kept.

3.6.3 MEL will respond to all questions it receives in a 'Consultation Stage Feedback Report'. Where a number of similar responses have been received, the frequency of this response will be noted and a standard response shall be given.

3.6.4 The 'Consultation Stage Feedback Report' will be produced following each stage of consultation. This will summarise all activity undertaken by MEL, how this activity meets with the commitment to consult, summaries of the feedback received and MEL's response. The appendices of these reports will contain details/images of all materials produced to support the consultation, for example the project website, leaflet and exhibition boards. Feedback summarised in the reports will be broken down into feedback received from statutory consultees, non-statutory consultees and the public.

3.6.5 A final Consultation Report will be submitted to PINS. Any previous feedback reports will be included as appendices to this final report. The content of the report will demonstrate how feedback has been taken into account and how the proposals have sought to incorporate the comments received from all stakeholders.

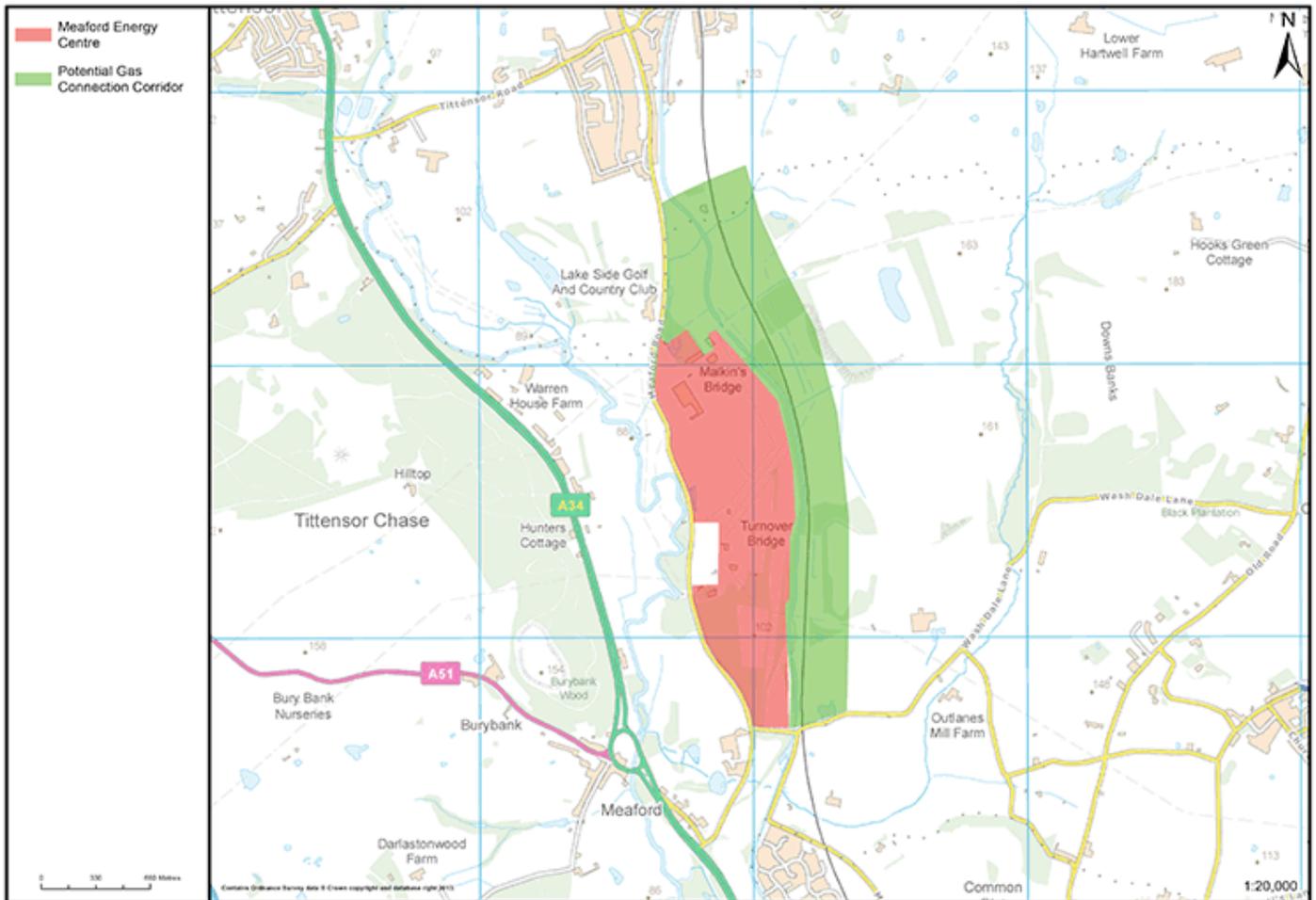
3.7 Going Forward/Next Steps

3.7.1 MEL will continue to work with Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council throughout the pre-application period to ensure its consultation is as thorough as possible and that we are reaching all those who may be affected by the proposals.

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Appendix 1 - Site/Location Plan, including the proposed gas pipeline corridor



Appendix 2 – Table of Key Consultees

Stafford Borough Council

Stafford Borough Council is a key consultee. To ensure that the local authority is fully engaged with at all levels, Meaford Energy Limited (MEL) will contact the following:

Ward Councillors

- Barlaston and Oulton Ward
- Stonefield and Christchurch Ward
- St Michael's Ward
- Milwich Ward
- Fulford Ward
- Swynnerton Ward

Key Cabinet Councillors

- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader
- Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Member
- Environment and Health Portfolio Member
- Community Portfolio Member

Council Committees

- Planning Committee

Council Executive body

- Chief Executive

Furthermore, MEL will also consult:

Staffordshire County Council

Electoral Division Councillors

- Stone Rural Division
- Stone Urban Division

Cabinet Councillors

- Leader of the Council
- Deputy Leader
- Communities, Culture and Localism Member
- Economy and Infrastructure Member
- Environment and Rural Affairs Support Member

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County Council Committees and Joint Bodies

- Planning Committee
- Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee
- Countryside and Rights of Way Panel
- Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton Joint Access Local Forum
- Staffordshire Local Government Association (Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Planning Forum)

Council Executive body

- Chief Executive
- Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

Other Local Authorities

- Staffordshire Moorlands District Council
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Member of Parliament

- Member of Parliament for Stone

Parish Councils

- Barlaston Parish Council
- Stone Rural Parish Council
- Stone Town Parish Council

Community bodies, partnerships and chambers

- Friends of the Earth North Staffordshire
- Staffordshire Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust
- Staffordshire Ecological Record
- Stone Ramblers
- Barlaston Golf Club
- National Trust
- North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Staffordshire Business and Environment Network
- Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Invest Stoke and Staffordshire
- National Farmers' Union (NFU)
- Country Land & Business Association (CLA)

Relevant Residents' Associations

- Blurton Farm Residents' Association
- Swynnerton Gardens Residents' Association

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Appendix 3 – Proposed Core Consultation Zone



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Appendix 4 – Indicative Timeline

It is currently anticipated that the Meaford Power Station proposal will progress as shown below.

24 September 2013 – 1 November 2013	Non-Statutory Informal public consultation, including public exhibitions (provisionally targeted for 9,10 and 11 October 2013), presentations, meetings and information provided by leaflet, website and other routes
Mid December 2013	Publication of consultation report (provisionally targeted for 16 December 2013)
Autumn/winter 2013/2014	Site investigations and surveys.
Spring 2014	Scoping for Environmental Impact Assessment. Consultation with Stafford Borough Council on Statement of Community Consultation
Early summer 2014	Formal consultation on the proposed development
End 2014	Submission of Development Consent Order application to the Planning Inspectorate
Early 2015 – mid 2015	Examination of application by the Planning Inspectorate
Late 2015/early 2016	Decision on application by Secretary of State