

## **PROPOSED MEAFORD ENERGY CENTRE**

### **HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TECHNICAL NOTE**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

1. Meaford Energy Limited (MEL) is promoting the development of the Meaford Energy Centre and Connections (MEC) which is a new combined cycle gas turbine (CCGT) power station at Meaford Business Park, Staffordshire. The CCGT power station will have an electrical capacity of up to 299 megawatts (MW). The development will comprise the CCGT power station and the integral gas pipeline between the MEC and the existing gas network.
2. The proposal constitutes a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the terms of the Planning Act 2008, as its capacity is greater than 50MW, and therefore, an application for a development consent order (DCO) is to be made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who will examine the DCO application on behalf of the Secretary of State.
3. This technical note is to support preliminary consultation on the MEC proposals. It provides an overview of the historic environment and identifies the potential effects on built heritage assets and their setting, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and gardens, and also the potential effects on buried archaeology.

#### **THE POTENTIAL FOR EFFECTS ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

4. The proposed development site, Meaford Business Park, contains no designated heritage assets. Two coal-fired power stations, Meaford A and Meaford B, were previously developed on the site. The site has limited potential for buried archaeology.
5. The proposed gas connection area outside of the proposed site would require a corridor of ground disturbance during construction, in which previously unknown buried archaeological remains might lie.
6. In the wider area around Meaford Business Park there are a number of statutorily Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments. To the south west of the business park is the Scheduled Monument of Bury Bank iron age hillfort. Adjacent to the eastern boundary of the business park is the Trent and Mersey Canal with a Conservation Area including a number of Grade II listed bridges.

7. To the south of the site is Meaford Hall which is a Grade II\* Listed Building. The effects of the proposed development on the setting of such designated heritage assets will be assessed.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

8. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposals will be undertaken to assess the potential effects of the proposed Meaford Energy Centre, and will incorporate a detailed assessment of the potential effects on heritage assets. The EIA process is an integral part of the review of options and the evolution of the final project design to ensure that heritage sensitivities are properly understood.
9. MEL will take into account the presence of known cultural heritage assets when considering the proposed CCGT power station site and gas pipeline route options. Once a preferred CCGT power station site and routes for the gas connection has been selected, an assessment of the implications of the development proposals for the historic environment will be undertaken. This will consider two principal issues:
  - Unknown buried archaeological remains - the potential effects on archaeological remains within the development footprint of the proposed CCGT power station site and the gas grid connection route corridor.
  - Designated built heritage assets - the potential changes to the setting of designated heritage assets in the landscape around the proposed CCGT power station and gas route corridor.
10. Baseline information will be collected from the County Record Office, and updated records from the Historic Environment Record (HER) and National Monuments Record (NMR). Cartographic and aerial photographic research will be undertaken to provide archaeological and historical background on the site. Data collected will include review of Historic Landscape Characterisation reports and relevant historic maps.
11. Published and unpublished information on the archaeological background of the area will be researched to assess the potential of discovering previously unknown archaeological remains within the site and immediate area. Results from any previous ground and archaeological investigations will be reviewed and potential below ground impacts assessed.
12. A walkover survey will be carried out around the proposed CCGT power station footprint to identify known constraints, assess the condition of the pipeline route, and to assess the potential for survival of constraints as yet unidentified (i.e. buried archaeological remains).
13. Staffordshire County Archaeological Services and Conservation Officer will be consulted further on issues relating to archaeological potential in the area and any specific issues raised during research.

## **ADDRESSING EFFECTS ON THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT**

14. MEL's approach is to identify and, where possible, avoid adverse effects on heritage assets. To this end, the following principles will be applied.
  - The design of the CCGT power station and its gas and electricity infrastructure will seek to minimise any significant adverse effects on the setting of heritage assets. These measures may include a re-siting of structures or altering the architectural form or design of structures.
  - The landscape mitigation strategy for the project will address the location of built heritage assets and the effects the scheme could have on their setting.
  - Where significant adverse effects cannot be designed out, appropriate mitigation measures and / or archaeological recording programmes will be identified and incorporated into the design proposals.
15. These measures will be drawn up in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders and statutory bodies.