
1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 Whilst there remains no statutory framework for planning consultations by applicants, North Kesteven District Council has adopted its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI States (paragraphs 4.2 – 4.5 extracts).

4.2 Pre-application discussions with planning officers are strongly encouraged for all applications in order to give applicants the best possible advice.....Prospective applicants will be expected to provide any information and clarification necessary to allow officers to form a view on any proposal.

4.3 All advice will be given in good faith, but cannot prejudice the outcome of any formal application, which is subsequently submitted. This is because all applications are subject to full publicity and consultation procedures and ultimately may be determined by one of the Council's development control committees.....

4.4 The new legislation requires local authorities to encourage applicants to undertake discussions with the community before actually submitting a planning application. Applicants should submit details of any consultation that they have undertaken with the community as part of their application.

4.5 The District Council believes that potential developers should engage with the wider community before submitting an application in case of: major applications of 10 or more dwellings; or of other applications which in the opinion of officers are likely to give rise to issues of significant impact in terms of planning considerations. Early public involvement will benefit everyone by ensuring that schemes are well understood by the community and allow local people to help shape the outcome of proposals that are likely to affect them significantly. The scale and scope of any consultation exercise should be agreed with Council officers on a case by case basis.

- 1.1.2 Eco2 Lincs Ltd (hereafter referred to as Eco2) agrees that consultation should be an inherent part of the planning process and always seeks to engage with

the relevant authorities, organisations stakeholders and communities at the appropriate juncture.

- 1.1.3 This document sets out how Eco2's consultation activities meet the aspirations of the SCI and enables North Kesteven District Council to take into account the wide ranging consultation that has been carried out by Eco2, in forming its decision on the application. It is divided into two principal sections covering technical consultations and public consultation.
- 1.1.4 In this case the planning application is virtually identical to an earlier application submitted by the applicant for the same proposal; the only material difference relates to the modification to the architectural treatment of the main buildings. The earlier application has provided ample opportunity for technical and community consultation, as described in this summary.
- 1.1.5 Eco2 intends to continue consultation activities through the determination period relating to this application.

2.0 TECHNICAL CONSULTATIONS

- 2.1.1 The applicant consulted widely with a variety of technical consultees, the local community and other relevant stakeholders, prior to submission of a virtually identical planning application for the same proposal (the only material difference relating to a revised architectural treatment).
- 2.1.2 Table 2.1 below sets out the technical consultation carried out by Eco2 and their consultants prior to the submission of the previous planning application. It identifies the relevant technical consultee, the scope of the consultation and any outcomes arising from the consultation process.
- 2.1.3 The previous application was then subjected to full public and statutory consultation over a period of some 10 months. In the course of these consultations, further information was sought and provided; where relevant, this information has been added to the Environmental Statement that supports this planning application. Consultations of particular note are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 Pre-Application Technical Consultations Pertaining to the Previous Planning Application

Ref.	Consultee	Scope of Consultation	Outcome
1	Various members of NKDC planning, economic development and environmental teams.	Meeting, 9 February 2007 Broad introduction to the project; outline of proposed consultation and content of an Environmental Statement. County Council Highways dept submitted initial comments by email.	<p>The Applicant was asked to provide further information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ stack height; ▪ stack colour; ▪ auxiliary fuel proposals. <p>The following were discussed and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the planning and PPC processes would run in parallel; ▪ the Environmental Statement would include a full review of the sequential site search; ▪ the format of the ES section on noise. <p>The Applicant was asked to give due consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the use of sustainable urban drainage systems; ▪ installation of further renewable energy such as PV; ▪ lighting schemes. <p>Various consultant details were tabled for further consultation on aspects of the ES such as archaeology.</p>
2	As (1) but with also: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ County council highways; ▪ Environment Agency 	Meeting, 6 March 2007 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discussion of highways impacts; ▪ opportunity for Environment Agency comment. 	<p>The Applicant tabled an advice note describing the current vehicle movements at the junction along with a summary of the added movements. This concluded that the junction was adequate for the increased traffic flows.</p> <p>The Environment Agency tabled nothing that had not already been considered by the Applicant and indicated that it would not require any further consultation until PPC application preparations were underway.</p>
3	Central Networks Systems	Meeting 22 March 2007 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ discussions on likely grid connection. 	Subject to detailed network analyses, the distribution network operator believes that the plant will be able to export into the adjacent 132 kV line.
4	As (2) but without Environment Agency. NKDC Sustainability Officer also attended	Meeting, 18 April 2007 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ feedback from Highways; ▪ general update. 	<p>Public consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the proposals for public consultation were agreed in principle; ▪ the applicant agreed to set up a web-site to allow the public access to information about the project when the planning application was submitted. <p>Highways</p>

Ref.	Consultee	Scope of Consultation	Outcome
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ several subjects to be covered in the ES were agreed; ▪ highways' consultation ongoing <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the applicant requested any information on potential uses for any topsoil that needed to be removed from site; ▪ the applicant was asked to consider possibilities for rain water harvesting.
5	NKDC Planning NKDC Economic Development	Meeting 25 July 2007 Discussion of general progress towards planning submission and review of the first public exhibition.	
6	Natural England	To discuss key biodiversity issues in the vicinity of the site.	Determined that it would be necessary to undertake dusk surveys for marsh harrier.
7	North Kesteven District Councils Ecological Consultants	Scope of ecological investigation sought from NKDC ecological consultants.	Agreed upon the following scope of survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ extended Phase 1 habitat survey of site and immediate surrounds, including adjacent woodland; ▪ breeding bird survey of site and surroundings, comprising 3 visits to the site, and 2 dusk surveys for barn owl / marsh harrier; and ▪ protected species survey, to include a search of ditches for water vole, search for signs of use by badger, and risk assessment of any trees or other structures which could support a bat roost; ▪ subsequent bat activity survey on a tree identified as having potential for roosting bats.
8	Lincolnshire Environmental Records Centre	Ecological data search.	Supplied data on protected species and non-statutory nature conservation sites within a 2km radius of the site.
9	North Kesteven District Council –Planning Department	Inquiry regarding the availability of a strategic flood risk assessment for the Sleaford area.	No assessment is available at present, although one is in the process of being procured.
10	The Environment Agency Flood Risk Team	Confirmation that the site did not lay within the extreme flood outline.	Consultations with representatives from the EA have confirmed that there is no historical or anecdotal evidence of any flooding in the vicinity of the proposed development site.
11	Representatives of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board.	To establish the existing land drainage regime in the immediate locality.	Consultations with representatives from the IDB have confirmed that there is no historical or anecdotal evidence of any flooding in the vicinity of the proposed development site.

Ref.	Consultee	Scope of Consultation	Outcome
			<p>The IDB did not consider that there would be any unacceptable impacts from the development and acknowledged the proposal to introduce attenuation.</p> <p>The IDB also confirmed that there was a levy system in place relating to off-site discharges into the land drainage network. This works on a sliding scale depending upon the extent of attenuation.</p>
12	North Kesteven District Council Environmental Health Officer: Noise	To establish the nearest sensitive receptors, proposed noise monitoring methodologies and appropriate noise criteria.	It was agreed that the appropriate noise criteria relevant to this proposed development would include PPG24: 1994 'Planning and Noise', BS4142: 1997 'Method for rating industrial noise affecting mixed residential and industrial areas' for any fixed plant equipment relative to any fixed industrial noise. For construction noise BS5228: Part 1 1997 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites' is relevant.
13	British Geological Survey.	To acquire baseline geological information.	Receive the plan covering the relevant part of Lincolnshire.
14	Environment Agency: Hydrogeology	Establish the groundwater vulnerability for the area local to the site and the presence of any aquifers.	Received information from the EA in respect of both groundwater and aquifers.

**Table 2.2 Responses to Post-Submission Technical Consultation
Pertaining to the Previous Planning Application**

Consultee	Comment	Response
Lincolnshire County Council Highways	Various requests for supplementary information	The supplementary information has been consolidated into the Transport Assessment (Appendix 6.1 of the supporting Environmental Statement).
Lincolnshire County Council Highways	Concerns over A17 westbound access junction at Kirkby La Thorpe	Optional junction improvements have been submitted as part of the Transport Assessment (Appendix 6.1 of the supporting Environmental Statement).
Lincolnshire County Council Highways	Concerns over implementation of a routeing agreement.	Further details of the routeing agreement, including contractual arrangements for its implementation and technical equipment for its policing are submitted in Appendix 6.2 to the supporting Environmental Statement.
Environment Agency	Requested further information in support of the Flood Risk Assessment.	Further information provided in Appendix 9.1 of the supporting Environmental Statement.
OPUN (Design Review Panel for East Midlands)	Suggested that the project would benefit from off-site screening.	Off-site screening is now proposed. Details are given in Section 7.0 and Figures 7.15(a-d) of the supporting Environmental Statement.
North Kesteven District Council Heritage Officer	Requested field work in addition to the desk-based study originally provided.	A full archaeological evaluation of the site was carried out. Details are given in Section 12.0 and in Appendix 12.2 of the supporting Environmental Statement.
North Kesteven District Council Ecological Consultants	Requested an Ecological Mitigation Plan	An Ecological Mitigation Plan is now presented as Appendix 8.6 of the supporting Environmental Statement

3.0 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

3.1.1 Public consultation encompasses meetings, discussions, correspondence, presentations, websites, and exhibitions etc which have taken place with:

- the general public;
- local organisations or interest groups;
- stakeholder groups such as Town or Parish Councils;
- individual stakeholders such as local members which are not deemed to be categorised as technical consultees.

3.1.2 The same comments given in regard to technical consultation apply to public consultation, in that Eco2 has already consulted on an almost identical

application. Table 3.1 below sets out details of pre-application consultation undertaken by Eco2 and their representatives / consultants in advance of the submission of the previous application.

Table 3.1 Pre-Application Public Consultation Pertaining to the Previous Planning Application

Ref.	Consultee	Scope of Consultation	Outcome
1	Local press and radio	Press conference, 12 July 2007	The project was unveiled for dissemination by the press.
2	Sleaford Chamber of Commerce Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce	Meeting, 12 July 2007	The project was introduced. It was received favourably. There was some concern about whether jobs would go to local people or incomers. The Applicant was able to provide reassurance on this point.
3	Sleaford National Farmers Union (NFU) Lincoln NFU	Meeting, 12 July 2007	The project was received favourably. Details of fuel types and quantities were discussed. The representatives wanted details on price but it was accepted that the meeting was not an appropriate forum for that type of discussion.
4	Chairman, Kirkby La Thorpe Parish Council	Meeting, 12 July 2007	Neutral response pending further information. Expressed concern about traffic on Boston Road and its junction with the A17 and particularly the impact during school transfer times and when the football ground is in use.
5	Sleaford Town Council	Meeting, 13 July 2007	Wary to begin with due to memories of the previous proposal for a gas fired power station on the outskirts of Sleaford. Keen to ensure that any Section 106 arrangements (as yet none are tabled) directly benefit Sleaford. The applicant asked the Town Council to consider potential heat users since it would be mutually beneficial to make use of waste heat from the plant.
6	Sustainability, Lincolnshire County Council Climate for Investment Programme, Lincolnshire Enterprise	Meeting, 13 July 2007	Very favourable response. Keen to see links between this scheme and the other biomass promotions (particularly biomass for heat).
7	Members of the public	Public exhibition in Kirkby La Thorpe, 24 July 2007	Attended by approximately 55 people.
8	Members of the public	Public exhibition in Sleaford, 26 July 2007	Attended by approximately 70 people.

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- 3.1.3 Consultation for the previous application continued post-submission. The public consultation process produced a number of comments from members of the public and stakeholder groups. In many cases these were addressed by referral to the relevant part of the Environmental Statement that supported the previous application. The only substantive additional information that was forthcoming from this process was a statement regarding the socio-economic impact of the project. This statement is included in the supporting Environmental Statement for this planning application as Appendix 4.1
- 3.1.4 The previous application was reported periodically in the local press and on local radio throughout its consultation process. The applicant also issued a newsletter on the project in November 2007 which was delivered to all houses in Kirkby La Thorpe and was made available at meeting points in Sleaford, notably the Tourist Information Centre, the town library and the Hub.
- 3.1.5 Eco2 set up a dedicated website, www.sleafordrep.co.uk, to disseminate information about the project at the time of the previous planning application. This holds the full text of the previous Environmental Statement, the application for a PPC Permit to operate the plant, a selection of frequently asked questions and answers and links to other useful sites. This web-site will be updated to reflect this planning application and its supporting material.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 In accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.4 of the authorities Statement of Community Involvement, Eco2 has provided full written details of consultations carried out by and on behalf of the company.
- 4.1.2 Eco2 and their consultants have undertaken widespread technical and public consultation as par of the formulation of their development proposals and planning application for the Sleaford REP. The foundation for this activity in the consultation that was carried out both pre- and post-submission of a planning application for an almost identical proposal (the only material difference relating to a revised architectural treatment). The comments received throughout this previous consultation have informed the development and planning processes.

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- 4.1.3 The consultations undertaken demonstrably meet / conform with the requirements / guidance set out within North Kesteven's Statement of Community Involvement. In fact, the thorough technical and public evaluation of the previous planning application mean that the current application will be far more widely publicised and more thoroughly understood than many projects for which the guidance was aimed.
- 4.1.4 Eco2 proposes to continue active consultation throughout and beyond the determination process. Amongst other media, this consultation will make use of the development's own web-site at www.sleafordrep.co.uk.