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Consultation and community liaison



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18.1 Summary

The proposed development received a high degree of interest and publicity during the sale of the site and subsequently following the purchase and the public announcement of the development proposal.

In accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines, consultation is required with key stakeholders and the public in order to outline the proposals, obtain feedback and address questions and concerns raised.

The developer is keen to establish a strong positive relationship with the local and wider community and has actively encouraged interaction, attending local community liaison meetings, arranging public consultation meetings and responding to interested parties who have contacted the company.

18.2 Introduction

This chapter sets out the steps that were taken with respect to the important matter of Community Liaison.

Liaison during and immediately post site acquisition

During the acquisition process of the site, several meetings were held with both Pembrokeshire County Council and The Welsh Assembly Government to discuss the Egnedol's proposals for the site.

Following the completion of the acquisition of the site, an initial press release was made on 21st September 2015 (included in volume 2) which was followed later that day by a television interview on BBC Wales Today and a subsequent local radio interview on 24th September 2015.

18.3 Scheduled Community Liaison

An existing community liaison structure, which was established by Dragon LNG and SEM Logistics was in place at the time of acquisition of the development site by Egnedol. The liaison structure is aimed at keeping local residents and stakeholders up to date with all developments and proposals for the Waterston Site. Following acquisition of the site, an Egnedol representative has been in attendance at each of the subsequent meetings.

This facility with its network of important local contacts, was adopted by Egnedol to set up an initial Community Liaison Meeting on 29th September 2015 in the Hazelbeach Community Hall.

This initial community liaison meeting was attended by representatives of the local community councils of the immediate area; Neyland Town Council, Llanstadwell Community Council, Milford Haven Town Council, Pembrokeshire County Council and the ward member for Neyland West.

The development proposal was discussed with the attendees, who were encouraged to outline any concerns based on the proposal information developed to date, speculation within the media and experience of historical proposals.

Key feedback from the meeting related to concerns over traffic, noise and odour. The Egnedol team discussed the concerns with the attendees and indicated that each of these are considered in the Environmental Impact Assessment. All attendees were also keen to ensure that the company was attempting to source the workforce for the proposed development from the local area, which was confirmed as a company aim during the meeting.

The regular Dragon/SEM Community Liaison Committee Meeting on 12th October presented another opportunity to brief the community on the proposals. Some concern was expressed regarding the potential for the plant to take "black bag" domestic waste, at which point it was clarified that this would not be the case with the facility operating utilising biomass and WDF derived biomass as the feedstock.

18.4 Additional Community Liaison

A community liaison meeting was held in Hazelbeach Community Hall on Thursday 14th January 2016 to outline the planning application to the general public. County & Community Councillors from the local area were also invited by email and members of the public were invited via advertisements in the local press and a leaflet drop to houses in the area.

The attendance on the day was estimated to be in excess of 200 people, attendees were asked to fill in a feedback form to give their opinions on the proposal. A total of 54 feedback forms were completed, 24 of which were in favour of the development, 20 were unsure but likely to be supportive with further information whilst 10 were against the proposal.

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The concerns raised were: -

- Transport and access;
- Odour;
- Noise;
- Emissions / Pollution.

The positives mentioned were: -

- Jobs;
- Sustainability;
- Approachability of Egnedol Staff.

The concerns raised have been addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment.

A further community liaison meeting was held on 18th of February 2016 in the Town Hall at Milford Haven. Approximately 150 people attended the meeting and the feedback from the public was generally positive.

18.5 Pembrokeshire County Council consultation

All members of Pembrokeshire County Council were invited to a briefing held on 23rd October 2015 to explain the proposed development. Egnedol gave a detailed powerpoint presentation of the proposals and each key area of the development, following which a comprehensive question and answer session was undertaken.

The possibility of extending the heat main to the Waterston site to adjoining industrial developments and potentially district heating for new residential developments was raised.

Requests were made for a fund to be set up to utilise some of the profits from the development back into the community and community projects.

The developer was requested to confirm that the proposal would not encroach onto the daffodil field and subsequently whether the daffodil fields and the Castle Pill pumping station, both of which are within the Egnedol ownership, could be dedicated to the community.

It was suggested that Egnedol should develop a working relationship with Pembrokeshire College for the development of training courses to support employment within the County.

Following the meeting with council members, the development team met with the Local Authority Heads of the planning, Head of regeneration, Head of property and the major planning projects officer to discuss the proposal. Individual planning officers from the key departments at Pembrokeshire were also then subsequently contacted to discuss the proposed development and obtain preliminary feedback.

A request for a scoping opinion was submitted to Pembrokeshire County Council on the 27th of October 2015. The scoping opinion was issued on the 11th of December 2015.

A site visit was requested by the Major Developments officer and subsequently held on the 18th of January 2016 for Local Authority technical officers to have a site tour, discuss the proposals with Egnedol representatives and ask any questions.

18.6 Natural Resources Wales consultation

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are a statutory consultee to the Local Authority and will also be responsible for issuing a permit for the operation of the development. Early contact was therefore made with NRW to discuss the proposals.

A meeting was held with key department members in Haverfordwest on the 15th of October 2015.

A copy of the request for a scoping opinion was also submitted to NRW for comment, with a response received on 11th of December 2015 as part of the Pembrokeshire County Council opinion.

An additional meeting was held with NRW on the 13th of January 2016 and again on 2nd June 2016 to discuss the planning and environmental permit applications.

18.7 Additional Stakeholders

In addition to consultations with regulators, the developer has consulted with the following stakeholder groups and organisations: -

- The Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum (PCF);
- Milford Haven Waterway Environmental Surveillance Group (MHWESG);
- Milford Haven Port Authority;
- The Enterprise Zone Board;
- Pembrokeshire College;
- Valero;
- Pembrokeshire Business Panel;
- Milford Town Council;
- RWE N power;
- National Grid;
- Health and Safety Executive;
- CADW;
- Dyfed Archaeological Trust;
- Mid and West Wales Fire Rescue Service;
- Pembroke Dock Town Council;
- Neyland Community Council;
- Llanstadwell Community Council;
- Philpin Agriculture;
- Crown Estate;
- Venn Farm;
- Ms Joan James;
- Pembrokeshire County Council;
- SEM Logistics;
- Dragon LNG;
- Natural Resources Wales.

The project has received widespread support from stakeholders and advice presented by has helped to shape the proposal. Examples of the way in which the proposal has been modified following consultations are provided below.

Access

Concerns were raised by residents with respect to the condition of the B4325 road between Blackbridge and Waterston. The road is narrow and constrained in places. In response to these concerns, the design team proposes to install an additional new access road to the Blackbridge site. The company will also prevent employees from using this section of the road network by contract.

Parking

Concerns were raised with respect to parking of staff and contractors in Waterston village. As a result of this consultation, the developer has elected to offer to construct a new car park to the north of the village which will enable staff working in the Waterston Eco Park to walk to their place of work. A mini bus will transport staff from the car park to the Blackbridge development.

Processing

During consultations with Milford haven Port Authority, the availability of existing fish processing facilities in the vicinity was highlighted. Consequently, the developer has elected to process fish off site at that location.

Ecology

Following detailed discussions with the local authority ecologist and NRW, the tunnels on site, which were previously potentially going to be utilised for algae production and growing mushrooms are now to be retained as bat habitat and enhanced where possible. Furthermore following the completion of several species surveys, additional ecological enhancements have been proposed by the developer in addition to an on-going ecological management plan for the land within their ownership which will protect or enhance ecological features and species on site.

Atmospheric Dispersion

Atmospheric Dispersion Modelling has been conducted for the development site, however following detailed discussions with the regulators where the importance of the surrounding SAC and SSSI designations was re-emphasised, Egnedol elected to amend the emission stack location and site layout to further minimise any deposition at the designated sites.

Visual Impact

Following discussions with local residents and Pembrokeshire County Council, concerns were raised regarding the scale of change to existing views of the development site, particularly from the direction of Milford Haven, which has an unrestricted view onto the Blackbridge area of the development site. In order to reduce visual impact to nearby sensitive receptors, the large new build structures required at the BtEf site have been located as far from the receptors at Milford Haven as practicable, with the largest new build structure, the biomass storage building located within a valley area which shields it from other surrounding viewpoints.

Noise

During public consultation and discussions with both NRW and the Local Authority, the level of noise was queried. The noise assessment showed that noise levels reaching surrounding sensitive locations would be below background levels. However in order to adopt a conservative approach, the main noise generating plant has been located as far from sensitive receptors as possible and enclosed within buildings.

Development of National Significance

The proposed development was accepted by the Welsh Government as a Development of National Significance and prescribed secondary consents.

A statutory 42 day consultation period was then completed in line with published guidance. All responses that were received during the 42 day DNS consultation period have been summarised in a separate consultation document that is provided with this EIA.

18.8 Conclusion

The requirements under EIA guidelines for consultation have been met.

Continued and ongoing consultation with stakeholders and the public is planned during the planning determination process and into the development phase, through both pro-active engagement and regular scheduled community liaison meetings.

The developer is actively seeking engagement and feedback from the community and is looking to continue to develop a positive relationship with the community.