

Didcot and Surrounding Area Infrastructure Improvement Update Consultation



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To: HP17@pccouncil.gov.uk

Reply Reply All Forward
Thu 10/04/2019 12:37

Dear Sir/Madam,

RWE Generation UK plc (RWE) writes in response to the Didcot and Surrounding Area Infrastructure Improvement Update online consultation. RWE owns Didcot Power Station which is directly affected by the Science Bridge proposal (Scheme B). RWE is generally supportive of the Science Bridge proposal but it remains concerned about the need for further engagement from Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) as well as the impact of the road alignment on its existing landholding, in particular:

1. The impact on RWE's existing access to Didcot A Power Station which also accommodates heavy and wide loads for Didcot B Power Station and the National grid substation;
2. The loss of the security gatehouse at the entrance to Didcot A Power Station;
3. The loss of one or both of Didcot A's settling lagoons which form an integral part of Didcot A power station's Environmentally Permitted site drainage system; and,
4. The segregation of RWE's Technical Support Centre from the Didcot A site by the proposed road.

RWE retains land at Didcot A Power Station for future power generation development. RWE is a holder of an electricity generation licence under Section 8 of the Electricity Act 1989 and a deemed statutory undertaker under the Planning Act 2016. RWE therefore requests that its operational land interests at Didcot A and B Power Station sites are protected and that alternatives are fully explored by the Council in order to minimise impacts to RWE. RWE also requires protection to ensure it retains the ability to maintain unrestricted access and operations at its Power Station sites and to develop the Didcot A site in the short to medium term for power generation and other development uses. This requires the Science Bridge scheme to ensure that future access arrangements to the Didcot A site are equivalent to those that already exist in terms of heavy and wide loads and that there is sufficient capacity within any junction design to accommodate development on the Didcot A site.

A suitable replacement for the existing security gatehouse at Didcot A will also need to be provided because the proposed road alignment will require its removal. The current security gatehouse also accommodates telecommunication and electricity services for the Didcot A and Technical Support Centre sites which will need to be replaced without disruption to the security of RWE's site and to the functioning of that Centre.

The Didcot A site is still operated/managed under an Environment Agency (EA) Environmental Permit and any changes to the drainage system are likely to require EA approval and formal variation of the site permit. The current proposal crosses Didcot A's settling lagoons which form an integral part of the Didcot A site drainage system and are required for the foreseeable future. A suitable alternative drainage system will need to be provided to both RWE's and the EA's satisfaction to maintain the site's drainage and compliance needs.

RWE's Technical Support Centre forms part of the Didcot A Power Station site and is used for operational purposes relevant to Didcot and wider Company business. The proposal will segregate the Technical Support Centre from the main site and potentially make it unsuitable for its current purpose. RWE requires continued use of its Technical Support Centre and invites the Council to engage in discussions with RWE without delay so that suitable alternatives or possible replacement land can be agreed.

It is requested that the Council continues to engage with RWE to ensure that the development of the Science Bridge scheme suitably accommodate the ongoing operational and development needs of the Power Station sites (in particular the most affected, Didcot A) and to ensure the impacts on RWE's land are kept to an absolute minimum by consideration of suitable alternatives, appropriate protection and compensation.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards

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