

# Community Forum Framework

## Hinkley Point C Connection Project

### Background

National Grid have completed the first stage of its consultation on the new connection required between Hinkley Point C and Seabank. The findings of this first stage will inform the decision about which route corridor the project will take.

### Objectives

The Community Forums are envisaged as a mechanism by which National Grid ensure that issues of interest and concern to the community are reflected and considered in this next stage of consultation. It is envisaged that Community Forums be used to engage with the communities along the route and involve them in the decision making process.

### Role of the Community Forum

- The role of the Community Forums is to inform the decisions that need to be taken by National Grid
- This includes being able to challenge and review the basis and information on which these decisions are being made
- The Community Forums will provide focus on issues affecting the community and will represent these concerns to National Grid
- National Grid will need to explain and defend its decisions in the light of the views of the Community Forums, as well as statutory consultees and individual representations in preparing and submitting the Development Consent Order to the IPC or its successor

### Terms of Reference - To be agreed by the Community Forums

“To consider and advise on issues that affect the local community and key stakeholders as a result of National Grid’s proposed connection from Hinkley Point C to Seabank.”

### Community Forum Constitution

- The suggested constitution for the Community Forums is on a geographic basis, with five catchment areas identified (see map)
- These areas will be represented by five Forums comprising “clusters” of Parish Council jurisdictions where a degree of common focus can be identified
- Membership should be broadly representative of the views and interests of communities and stakeholders within the catchment areas
- Forums need to be large enough to ensure a cross section of representative interests to bring balance to the debate
- At the same time, Forums need to be sufficiently contained to ensure that specific local issues can be represented

## Membership of the Community Forum

- There is an optimum size to the membership of each Forum in the range 15 to 25 representatives. To be agreed by the Community Forum
- Each Community Forum will be largely self-selecting
- The key question that should be asked is “are we representative of local communities and interests”
- Each group should put forward one member for the relevant Community Forum
- In order to be eligible, members should be representatives of groups or organisations of five or more individuals\* (TBC)
- The member is responsible for bringing the views of those they represent to the Forum
- The member is responsible for reporting back on the proceedings of the Forum to their group
- The Local Authorities may also provide assistance, particularly with respect to harder to reach groups

## Organisation for the Community Forum

- The Community Forums are convened by the Strategic Chair
- A Local Co-ordinator will assist in agreeing the agenda
- Members of the National Grid Hinkley Point C Connection project team will be present at every meeting if invited\* (TBC)
- Admin support will be provided by 3G Communications, who have been retained to manage the logistics and administrative elements
- National Grid will pay for the facilitation of the Community Forums (eg. venue) if agreed by the Forum members

## The Strategic Chair

Leonora Rozee OBE BA(Hons) MRTPI has been appointed as the Strategic Chair of the Community Forums. She is appointed by Planning Aid as a Planning Aid volunteer and is wholly independent of National Grid or anyone else with an interest in this project.

Her role is to provide independent chairing and facilitation for the five Community Forums set up by National Grid to:

- Ensure that the community understands what a Community Forum is, what participants can expect of it, how it is set up and its purpose in moving project decisions forward
- Set the agenda for each Forum meeting – agenda to comprise generic topics to be discussed by all Forums and locally specific topics to be identified by the individual local Forums (see role of Local Co-ordinators below)
- Work with the Local Co-ordinators to ensure that local issues are properly debated and outcomes achieved
- Chair all Forum meetings to ensure that all agenda items are properly discussed and clear outcomes achieved
- Agree the minutes of the meetings for publication

## Local Co-ordinators

Each Community Forum is invited to have its own Local Co-ordinator whose role will be to:

- Work with the Strategic Chair to set the agenda for each local Forum meeting to ensure that the agenda reflects both generic and local interests
- Support the Strategic Chair at Forum meetings to ensure that local issues are properly debated and outcomes achieved
- Agree the minutes with the Strategic Chair

In supporting the Strategic Chair, Local Co-ordinators will be expected to:

- Be willing to act for the community rather than for individual personal interest
- Have an interest in working with the Strategic Chair to ensure that Community Forum meetings are productive and effective
- Be able to attend evening meetings approximately once a quarter
- Have access to electronic communications - preferred

In taking on the role of Local Co-ordinator, the successful individual will be asked to agree to the following:

- Their role is to assist the Strategic Chair in facilitating discussions relating to local issues
- They will support the Strategic Chair to ensure that those with different views are given an equal chance to be heard
- They will act in a fair and impartial way by not expressing a personal view on the merits or otherwise of the scheme in public
- They will respect the right of the Strategic Chair to manage the meetings

### Rules of Engagement

In order for the Community Forums to operate successfully, a safe environment where all attendees feel able to speak freely needs to be created. To this effect, some basic ground rules need to be established.

### Participants

- Are asked to respect the independence of the Strategic Chair (and the impartiality of any Local Co-ordinators)
- Are asked to respect the right of the Strategic Chair to manage the meetings to ensure that they are productive and effective
- Are asked to respect the rights of others to have different views and that they have an equal right to be heard
- Are asked to listen when others are speaking
- Are asked NOT to: use mobile phones, heckle, cheer, use bad language, or disrupt the proceedings

### Media

- Are asked to identify themselves to the Strategic Chair at the start of each meeting
- Are asked not to video or record proceedings as this may inhibit people in expressing their views openly
- Are asked to seek consent from any individuals featured or quoted in any coverage of the meetings. Permissions should be sought after the meeting is finished