

# **Ferrybridge Next Generation Power Station**

## **Programme Document**

Date: November 2024

**Applicant: SSE Hydrogen Developments Limited**

The Planning Act 2008

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus

**PINS Ref: EN0110011**

## Document Verification

Version	Date	Author	Approver	Changes
0	October 2024	DWD	Applicant	Document for SSE Website
1	November 2024	DWD	Applicant	Following comments from PINS, additional milestones with indicative dates included.

## Glossary

Applicant	SSE Hydrogen Developments Ltd
Application	The Applicant's DCO application for the Proposed Development
DCO	Development Consent Order
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
WMDC	Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
NYC	North Yorkshire Council
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PA 2008	The Planning Act 2008
PEI Report	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PINS	The Planning Inspectorate
Proposed Development	Ferrybridge Next Generation Power Station
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SoS	Secretary of State

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# 1. Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 This Programme Document has been prepared on behalf of SSE Hydrogen Developments Limited (the 'Applicant') pursuant to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's 'Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' guidance. It relates to a proposed application (the 'Application') for a Development Consent Order (a 'DCO'), that is expected to be submitted to the Secretary of State (the 'SoS') for Energy Security and Net Zero ('DESNZ'), under Section 37 of the 'Planning Act 2008' (the 'PA 2008') in Q3 2025.
- 1.2 The Application will seek a DCO in respect of the Ferrybridge Next Generation Power Station (the 'Proposed Development') on land at and within the vicinity of the former Ferrybridge 'C' Power Station Site, Kirkhaw Lane, Ferrybridge, Knottingley, West Yorkshire – within the administrative area of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, and a land corridor extending eastwards into the administrative area of North Yorkshire Council.

## The Applicant and the Proposed Development

- 1.3 The Applicant is part of the Thermal Division of the FTSE-listed SSE plc, is one of the United Kingdom (UK)'s largest and broadest-based energy companies, and the country's leading generator of renewable energy. Over the last 20 years, SSE plc has invested over £20bn to deliver industry-leading offshore wind, onshore wind, Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT), energy from-waste, biomass, energy networks and gas storage projects.
- 1.4 SSE has a long history at the Ferrybridge site, within the community and local economy, initially as the owner / operator of Ferrybridge C power station then latterly decommissioning and demolishing the legacy coal station. SSE also developed Ferrybridge Multifuel 1 and Multifuel 2 on parts of the former Ferrybridge C station.
- 1.5 The Proposed Development comprises of the construction, operation and maintenance of single or multiple gas turbine (GT) units with a combined capacity of up to 1.2GW electrical output on land of the former Ferrybridge C Power Station Site, near Ferrybridge, West Yorkshire. The Proposed Development will consist of up to two generating stations and will provide flexible power generation with GT units arranged in either open or closed cycle configurations, or a combination, depending on market requirements. Gas will be transported from the Gas Transmission System to the Main Site via a gas pipeline connection corridor extending into North Yorkshire.
- 1.6 The Proposed Development will be designed to run on 100% hydrogen fuel from the outset of operations. However, the new power station may be required to run on natural gas or a blend of hydrogen and natural gas until a resilient hydrogen supply becomes available. Once there is a secure supply of commercially viable hydrogen and associated infrastructure, the Proposed Development will seek to transition to 100% hydrogen firing. SSE plc is engaging with developers on the development of hydrogen infrastructure. The Proposed Development is subject to ongoing technical (environmental and engineering) studies.

## The Purpose and Structure of the Programme Document

- 1.7 In May 2024, the Government published its 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus', which introduced a new pre-application service for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects ('NSIPs') such as the Proposed Development. The new pre-application service is supported by updated guidance published on the Government's 2024 National Infrastructure Planning Guidance Portal.
- 1.8 The Pre-application Prospectus introduces three pre-application tier options reflecting different levels of service that applicants may receive from the Planning Inspectorate ('PINS') ahead of submitting an application for a NSIP. These are:
  - Tier 1: Basic;
  - Tier 2: Standard; and
  - Tier 3: Enhanced
- 1.9 At the current time, the Applicant has indicated that it wishes to select the 'Basic' pre-application service tier and will be reviewed after the EIA scoping stage.
- 1.10 The Government has produced guidance 'Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects', which explains the purpose of preparing a Programme Document and also sets out what it should cover.
- 1.11 The guidance states (Paragraph 009 Reference ID 02-009-20240430) that the pre-application process for NSIPs is applicant-led and to deliver a good pre-application process, including effective engagement and a well-prepared application, applicants should put together a Programme Document at the outset of the pre-application stage for submission to PINS.
- 1.12 The guidance goes on to state that the Programme Document will enable all those engaged in the pre-application process, particularly statutory consultees, to understand the timescales and ensure their contribution is programmed into the pre-application stage at the most effective point. It will also assist the Applicant in managing the preparation and subsequent submission of the application documents for consideration by PINS at the acceptance stage.
- 1.13 It is expected that the applicant will host and maintain the agreed Programme Document on its website and update it as necessary during the pre-application stage to publicise completion of significant stages and demonstrate progress in preparation of the application.

1.14 While the Programme Document is not a statutory requirement or for consultation, the guidance states that it should include (Paragraph 010 Reference ID 02-010-20240430):

- the date the applicant intends to submit their application;
- a comprehensive timetable of the applicant's pre-application process, the main events with dates and milestones demonstrating how the pre-application process will be completed (using the maximum target of 2 years as a benchmark);
- the applicant's view on the main issues for resolution and activities they will undertake to address those;
- the applicant's proposals for engaging with statutory consultees and local authorities during the pre-application period and any intended financial support agreements, such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs);
- the applicant's identification of risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process by which these risks are tracked and managed; and
- cross references to the Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC') required by section 47 of the PA 2008.

1.15 This Programme Document is, therefore, structured as follows:

- **Section 2.0** – Sets out the indicative timetable for the Applicant's pre-application process, including key dates/milestones and the anticipated submission date for the application.
- **Section 3.0** – Sets out the main issues for resolution during the pre-application stage, including the activities that will be undertaken to address those issues, and also identifies potential risks to the achievement of the pre-application stage.
- **Section 4.0** – Sets out the Applicant's proposals for pre-application consultation, including engagement with statutory consultees and local authorities during the pre-application stage, with cross-references to the SoCC and also the position with regard to any PPA.

1.16 This Programme Document will be published on the Applicant's project website.

1.17 The Programme Document will be updated periodically throughout the pre-application process.

## 2. Pre-Application Process Timetable

2.1 Table 2.1 sets out an indicative timetable for the Applicant's pre-application process, including key dates/milestones and the anticipated submission date for the Application. The timetable may be subject to change and this Programme Document will be updated throughout the DCO process as timescales are refined moving forward.

**Table 2.1 Pre-Application Process Timetable**

Activity/ Event	Date/ Milestone
Project website launch	Completed – <a href="https://www.ssethermal.com/flexible-generation/development/ferrybridge-next-generation-power-station/">https://www.ssethermal.com/flexible-generation/development/ferrybridge-next-generation-power-station/</a>
Development of stakeholder engagement strategy, including statutory and informal consultation for project	From September 2024
EIA Scoping Report issued to PINS	8 October 2024
EIA Scoping Opinion received from PINS	Q4 2024
Project update Meetings (PINS)	Anticipated December 2024; February 2025; April 2025; End June/Early July 2025.
Consultation with host local planning authorities on draft Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC')	Mid-January to Mid-February 2025
Publication of SoCC	Anticipated early March 2025
Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)	Anticipated end Q1 / early Q2 2025
Statutory Consultation. Including in-person events	Anticipated end Q1 / early Q2 2025
Early Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) submission	To be agreed with the LPAs
DCO Application Submission	Early September 2025

### 3. Stakeholder Engagement

- 3.1 A stakeholder engagement strategy is in development, with a dedicated stakeholder engagement lead appointed for the project.
- 3.2 Statutory and informal consultation is proposed for the project. At the early stages, this includes (but not limited to) initial meetings with PINS, Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, North Yorkshire Council, and also initial engagement with key statutory consultees – including but not limited to the Environment Agency, Natural England and National Highways.
- 3.3 The Applicant will also re-establish the Ferrybridge Community Liaison Group (CLG), which helped forge a beneficial working relationship in locality during previous site projects.

- 3.4 A dedicated project website has been launched:

<https://www.ssethermal.com/flexible-generation/development/ferrybridge-next-generation-power-station/>

- 3.5 The project website will be updated regularly as the Project evolves. In addition, there will also be updates via newsletters, CLG events and regular communications and other information. In line with PINS guidance, the project website will be well signposted – for example, it will provide sub-pages and structured sections covering different document groupings.
- 3.6 This Programme Document will be updated to provide further details of the stakeholder engagement strategy.
- 3.7 Further details on the statutory consultation methods will be set out in a future Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC'), in accordance with s47(1) PA 2008. The relevant local authorities (WMDC and NYC) will also be formally consulted on the SoCC before publication.
- 3.8 The technical consultation aspects of statutory consultation (for example, with statutory environmental bodies, relevant statutory undertakers, and landowners) will be carried out in accordance with s42-44 PA 2008 and associated regulations. All consultation activities will be reported on a future Consultation Report accompanying the application, as required under s37 PA 2008. The report will also demonstrate the regard had to consultation feedback in accordance with s49 PA 2008.
- 3.9 Following the consultation, stakeholders will be updated at key milestones during the application process. A comprehensive stakeholder engagement plan will be developed as the proposed development moves into the construction phase and throughout the duration of the project.



## 4. Main Issues and Risks

### Main Issues Identified by the Applicant

- 4.1 This section sets out the headlines of the main issues for resolution during the pre-application stage, including the activities that will be undertaken to address those issues and also identifies potential risks to the achievement of the pre-application stage.
- 4.2 The main issues that have been identified at this point in the pre-application process are set out in **Table 4.1** below.

**Table 4.1 Main Issues Identified by the Applicant**

Main Issues	Mitigation Activities
Air emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dispersion modelling to assess impacts and determine stack heights</li> <li>• Adherence to emission limits</li> <li>• Engagement with the Environment Agency to agree any required mitigation measures and approach to Environmental Permitting and use of Best Available Techniques.</li> <li>• PEIR and ES to consider dust from construction and eventual decommissioning works and emissions from plant equipment and effects on dust soiling, human health and biodiversity</li> </ul>
Noise emissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise modelling to assess impacts including operation of the Proposed Development</li> <li>• Engagement with the local planning authority to agree acceptable noise limits and with the Environment Agency to agree approach to Environmental Permitting</li> </ul>
Flood risk in the event of a breach of River Aire defences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood modelling to assess impacts outside the Site</li> <li>• Engagement with the Environment Agency to agree any required mitigation measures</li> </ul>
Ecological impacts and delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological surveys to inform impact assessment</li> <li>• Use of Defra BNG metric &amp; identification of habitat enhancements</li> <li>• Engagement with Natural England to agree Habitats Regulations Assessment conclusions and any required mitigation measures</li> </ul>
Surface water availability for abstraction/cooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abstraction from River Aire being evaluated for use in cooling</li> </ul>
Hydrogen readiness tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with hydrogen technology providers</li> </ul>
Climate change and GHG assessment scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define potential scenarios for fuelling the Proposed Development to be applied to GHG assessment</li> </ul>
R (Finch) vs Surrey County Council case law implications for scope of EIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review potential upstream and downstream effects, whether there is an 'inevitable' causal link, and the extent to which these can be meaningfully assessed in the EIA</li> </ul>
Traffic and transport, including potential navigation impacts and obstruction impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEIR / ES Traffic and Transport chapter to include specific considerations of construction, operation and decommissioning effects</li> </ul>
Water Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PEIR / ES Water Environment and Flood Risk chapter to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Potential for construction and operational works to change sediment quality and mobilise sediments;</li> <li>○ Potential for significant effects on sensitive receptors;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PEIR/ ES Water Environment and Flood Risk chapter to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ information on effluent streams and discharges related to construction and operation of the Proposed Development</li> <li>○ evidence of consultation with relevant consultees in relation to the scope and methodology of water quality assessment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Risks to Achievement of Pre-App Stage Identified by the Applicant

4.3 Table 4.2 below sets out the risks currently identified by the Applicant's to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process for tracking and managing these risks.

**Table 4.2 Main Risks Identified by the Applicant**

Risks	Management of Risk
Delays due to resource constraints within statutory consultee organisations and local authorities	Setting up paid pre-application advice agreements, including cost recovery, where available with key statutory consultees (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England). The Applicant will also explore Planning Performance Agreement(s) with the local planning authorities.
Adequacy of environmental surveys	Use of existing site data and approaches previously agreed (where relevant) and engagement with Natural England on survey methodologies.
Adequacy of pre-application consultation	<p>A stakeholder engagement strategy is in development.</p> <p>A range of consultation methods will be employed to provide opportunities for people to learn more about the Proposed Development and provide comments.</p> <p>The Applicant will prepare a Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC'), which sets out the proposals for the statutory consultation and will consult the host local authority on the document. The Applicant will have regard to the comments and feedback received during this consultation as appropriate in finalising the SoCC.</p> <p>In accordance with the 'Adequacy of Consultation Milestone', which has been introduced by the pre-application prospectus, the Applicant will make a written submission, confirming the approaches set out in the SoCC, and summarising the consultation responses and the way in which they are shaping the application. This would minimise risk at the acceptance stage.</p>
Potential objections from key stakeholders or statutory consultees/ inability to resolve issues identified during pre-application prior to acceptance	An Issues Tracker will be developed to highlight key issues raised during the pre-application stage (e.g. around environmental effects) and the relevant stakeholders affected. This document will be updated regularly throughout the pre-application process and will inform the application document, the Potential Main Issues for the Examination (PMIE) which will be entered into the examination as an application document.