



Subject:

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF SSE PLC TO THE LOCAL PLAN 2019 – DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

Date:

17 June 2019 16:46:40

Attachments:

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Dear Sir/Madam,

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF SSE PLC TO THE LOCAL PLAN 2019 – DRAFT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

I write on behalf of SSE PLC ('SSE') to make representations to the Draft Local Plan (Proposed Submission Version Local Plan).

SSE is the owner and operator of the 2,000-megawatt Fiddlers Ferry coal-fired power station, including adjoining land to the east and the power station ash lagoons (across the St. Helens Canal) to the south.

The majority of the power station site, including the power island, coal yard, rail loop and ash processing facility to the east is identified as an 'Existing Employment Area' on the Draft Local Plan Proposals Map and is subject to Policy DEV4 'Economic Growth and Development'. SSE is supportive of the power station site's continued identification as an employment area with Warrington. Following a comprehensive review of its Fiddler's Ferry Coal-Fired Power Station, SSE is proposing to close the remaining operational units at the site. SSE is now commencing consultation with employees and trade unions with a view to closing the station by 31 March 2020. It is recognised that decommissioning and demolition would take a number of years to complete and ash extraction / sales would continue beyond the proposed closure date, as a result SSE welcome the Council's recognition (at paragraph 3.3.23 of the Draft Local Plan) that the power station site has the potential to contribute to meeting future employment needs within the Borough.

SSE supports the inclusion of paragraphs 13 to 17 within Policy DEV4 'Economic Growth and Development' relating to the 'Fiddlers Ferry Employment Area'. Significantly, this part of Policy DEV4 encourages development that facilitates and supports the site's transition as it ceases to operate as a coal-fired power station, including continued investment in power generation and related development. This is particularly important as the site is ideally suited to alternative forms of power generation and related development, being connected to the National Grid, having good road and rail links, other utility and infrastructure connections and a skilled workforce. In addition, SSE welcomes the policy support for the ash operations, as these are likely to continue well after the coal-fired power station closes. The continued ash operations contribute to sustainability objectives through the recycling of a waste product for use in a number of applications.

SSE also welcomes the inclusion within the Draft Local Plan of the explanatory/supportive text to Policy Dev 4 at paragraphs 4.2.24 to 4.2.29.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of these representations.

Yours faithfully,

Rob Booth

RELEVANT EXTRACTS FROM THE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

3.3.23 The Council recognises the potential of Fiddlers Ferry Power Station to contribute to meeting future employment needs with the likelihood that the power station will be decommissioned during the Plan period. Given the uncertainties over the timing of decommissioning and the requirements for extensive site remediation, Fiddlers Ferry has not been included in the Plan's identified employment land supply at this stage. It will however contribute to meeting Warrington's longer term employment needs meaning that it is not necessary to consider safeguarding additional land for employment beyond the Plan period.

Policy DEV 4 - Fiddlers Ferry Employment Area

13. At Fiddlers Ferry Power Station, within the area defined on the Policies Map, the Council will support development which enhances the existing employment opportunities at the facility, as well as employment development that facilitates and supports the site's transition as it ceases to operate as a coal fired power station and which:

- a. Continues investment in power generation and provides opportunities for the establishment of related development;*
- b. delivers opportunities to provide land for B1, B2 & B8 employment uses;*
- c. brings about traffic and environmental benefits through a transfer of material from road to rail or waterway;*
- d. supports and enhances the operational efficiency of the site;*
- e. contributes to sustainability through the use of renewable natural resources or the recycling of secondary or man-made resources;*
- f. helps to secure the long term nature conservation value of the Mersey Valley and enhances its recreational value.*

14. Development proposals should not compromise the existing ash processing activities, which are expected to continue beyond the coal power station's operational life.

15. Any future development proposals post coal power generation, will need to consider the cumulative transport impacts of the development and how the development will relate to the wider Widnes Waterfront Regeneration Area in Halton.

16. Development proposals outside of the defined site area on the Policies Map will be assessed against National Policy Statements for Energy, as well as national Green Belt policy.

17. Any proposed neighbouring developments should not constrain the development of the site for employment uses and energy generation

4.2.24 The Council is aware that while Fiddlers Ferry power station is likely to continue operating into the next decade, Government energy policy is putting pressure on cessation of coal power by 2025. The site may therefore come forward for development and represents a major future

brownfield redevelopment opportunity for new employment uses.

4.2.25 The site is ideally suited to power generation, being connected to the National Grid with supporting infrastructure on-site, having rail and road transport links, benefiting from a supply of cooling water and having a skilled workforce. Were a new power plant to come forward at the site in the future, this is likely to have a much smaller footprint than the existing Power Station, potentially freeing up land for power-related and other employment development.

4.2.26 The site has the potential to be a major focus for employment and economic activity linking with other initiatives within the area, including the Widnes Waterfront regeneration area in Halton. In order to fulfil its potential, it will be crucial that surrounding developments and initiatives do not unduly constrain power generation development opportunities at the site.

4.2.27 The decommissioning and demolition of the existing Power Station will however take a number of years to complete. The existing ash processing activities at the site are also expected to continue beyond the coal power station's life span, until the existing deposits are fully depleted, given the current market demand for ash.

4.2.28 There is not currently therefore sufficient certainty for the site to be included within the Council's developable employment land supply, but given the scale of the site, this will need to be kept under review.

4.2.29 The likelihood of the site coming forward at some point in the future, together with the buffer included within the land supply calculation, does however mean that the Council is confident it will have sufficient employment land to meet Warrington's needs well beyond the end of the Plan Period.

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