



Thurrock Flexible Generation Plant

**Environmental Statement Volume 6
Appendix 4.1: Transboundary Impacts Screening Note**

Date: November 2019

Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Statement

Volume 6

Appendix 4.1

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Summary

This document provides a screening assessment of potential for transboundary impacts (i.e. impacts on the territory of other European Economic Area states) using the criteria in Annex 1 of the Planning Inspectorate Advice Note Twelve.

Qualifications

This document has been prepared by Anna Gillespie BSc (Hons), MSc, a Consultant who has four years' experience of planning consultancy and environmental impact assessment.

It has been checked by Tom Dearing, a Chartered Environmentalist and full Member of the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment, who has nine years' experience of environmental impact assessment.

1. Transboundary Effects Screening

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report for Thurrock Flexible Generation Plant was accepted by PINS on 9 August 2018 and the Scoping Opinion was received from PINS on 20 September 2018. The Scoping Opinion states at paragraph 3.3.22 that:

“The Scoping Report concludes that the Proposed Development is not likely to have significant effects on another European Economic Area (EEA) State and proposes that transboundary effects do not need to be considered within the ES. The Inspectorate notes the Applicant’s conclusion in the Scoping Report; however recommends that, for the avoidance of doubt, the ES details and justifies this conclusion.”

1.1.2 Accordingly, in Table 1.1, further information to justify that conclusion is provided, using the criteria set out in PINS Advice Note 12.

1.1.3 Transboundary effects arise when impacts from the development within one European Economic Area (EEA) state affect the environment of another EEA state(s). The need to consider transboundary effects has been embodied by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on EIA in a Transboundary Context (commonly referred to as the ‘Espoo Convention’). The Convention required that assessments are extended across borders between Parties of the Convention when a planned activity may cause significant adverse transboundary impacts.

1.1.4 In the UK, regulation 32 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 sets out the basis for statutory notification and consultation with other EEA states. Additionally, PINS Advice Note 12 (Transboundary Impacts and Processes) discusses transboundary impacts and states that applicants can undertake their own research into environmental issues or may be informed by transboundary screening from the Secretary of State. The Inspectorate will exercise reasonable discretion to determine likely significant effects in another EEA state, based in part upon the information supplied by the applicant.

1.2 Screening criteria

1.2.1 Annex 1 of PINS Advice Note 12 sets out the criteria and relevant considerations that will be taken into account by the Inspectorate when undertaking transboundary screening. The transboundary screening criteria and applicability to Thurrock Flexible Generation Plant are set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Transboundary Screening Criteria as set out in Annex 1 of PINS Advice Note Twelve

Screening Criteria	Required details	Relevant considerations
Characteristics of the development	Size of the development Use of natural resources Production of waste Pollution and nuisances Risk of accidents Use of technologies	The development would comprise gas engines and battery storage on an approximately 20 ha main development site plus gas and electricity connections, creation of private access roads and designation of exchange Common Land and habitat creation. The main natural resource consumed would be commercially supplied natural gas. The development would have minor waste streams such as used lubricating oil. No significant pollution or nuisance impacts are predicted and the risk of accidents would be as low as reasonably practicable, with environmental effects due to accidents not considered likely. The development would be located wholly onshore in the UK and would not affect any other EEA state through these characteristics.
Location of the development (including existing use) and geographical area	What is the existing use? What is the distance to another EEA state? What is the extent of the area of a likely impact under the jurisdiction of another EEA state?	The development would be located wholly onshore in the UK and is not within or in proximity to any other EEA state. The existing land-use is mainly arable and Common Land.
Environmental importance	Are particular environmental values (e.g. protected areas – name them) likely to be affected? Capacity of the natural environment Wetland, coastal zones, mountain and forest areas, nature reserves and parks, Natura 2000 sites, areas environmental quality standards already exceeded, densely populated areas, landscapes of historical, cultural or archaeological significance.	The Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar site, approx. 2.6 km east of the proposed main development site, is of international importance for wintering birds. No likely significant effects on this site are predicted.

Screening Criteria	Required details	Relevant considerations
Potential impacts and carrier	By what means could impacts be spread (i.e. what pathways)?	The main potential pathway for impacts beyond the immediate vicinity of the development site is emissions of nitrogen dioxide and greenhouse gases (GHGs), primarily carbon dioxide, from gas engine operation and dispersion in the atmosphere. No release of polluting substances to watercourses is considered likely.
Extent	What is the likely extent of the impact (geographical area and size of the affected population)?	Nitrogen dioxide concentrations would be negligible beyond the air quality study area of 15 km radius and would not affect the air quality of any other EEA state. GHG releases and contribution to climate change have, in effect, a global extent.
Magnitude	What will the likely magnitude of the change in relevant variables relative to the status quo, taking into account the sensitivity of the variable?	Total national GHG emissions are limited by the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution commitments under the Paris Agreement. Control mechanisms relevant to GHG emissions from the proposed development, such as the cap on total emissions provided by participation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme or equivalent measure to be determined during the Brexit transition period, are in place. Zero magnitude of net transboundary impact is therefore predicted.
Probability	What is the degree of probability of the impact? Is the impact likely to occur as a consequence of normal conditions or exceptional situation, such as accidents?	No impact has been identified which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA state.
Duration	Is the impact likely to be temporary, short-term or long-term? Is the impact likely to relate to the construction, operation or decommissioning phase of the activity?	No impact has been identified which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA state.
Frequency	What is the likely to be temporal pattern of the impact?	No impact has been identified which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA state.
Reversibility	Is the impact likely to be reversible or irreversible?	No impact has been identified which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA state.

Screening Criteria	Required details	Relevant considerations
Cumulative impacts	Are other major development close by?	There are three other proposed Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects nearby, one of which has development consent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tilbury2 expansion of the Port of Tilbury (consented); • the Lower Thames Crossing (motorway); and • The London Resort (leisure park). However, no cumulative impact has been identified which would be likely to have significant effects on the environment in another EEA state.

1.2.2 In conclusion, it is considered that there is no possibility that Thurrock Flexible Generation Plant will have any significant transboundary impacts and hence they have been scoped out of the EIA.

2. References

SI 2017/572 Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017

The Planning Inspectorate (2017) Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: Process, Preliminary Environmental Information, and Environmental Statements

The Planning Inspectorate (2018) Advice Note twelve: Transboundary Impacts and Process