



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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22 November 2023

Dear Ms Thomas-Davies,

CORYTON ENERGY COMPANY LIMITED

**UPGRADES TO TURBINE PLANT AT CORYTON POWER STATION,
CORRINGHAM, STANFORD-LE-HOPE, SS17 9GN**

**THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)
(ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2017 – REGULATION 10 REQUEST
FOR A SCREENING DECISION**

Thank you for your letter dated 28 September 2023 on behalf of Coryton Energy Company Limited (“the Applicant”) which requested a Screening Decision from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (“the Secretary of State”) under Regulation 10 of the Electricity Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017 (“the 2017 Regulations”) in anticipation of an application being submitted to vary the consent for the Coryton Power Station (“the Power Station”) which was granted by the Secretary of State on 14 March 1997 under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989. This email was supplemented with an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) Screening Report which provides the information required under Regulations 6 and 12 of the 2017 Regulations, including a plan sufficient to identify the Proposed Development and information detailing the works to be undertaken and the predicted effects on the environment.

Proposed Development background

Department for Energy Security and Net Zero officials on behalf of the Secretary of State met with the Applicant online on 19 September 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Applicant with the opportunity to introduce the works to be undertaken prior to submitting a formal request for an environmental determination.

The Applicant is seeking to upgrade the turbine plant, proposing a number of internal changes to the existing gas turbines and associated systems, which it states will allow for an increase in the maximum electricity generating capacity by about 77MW to 850MW (“the Proposed Development”). The works involved include the installation of the General Electric HE Upgrade to two existing gas turbines within the Power Station. The upgrade comprises the retrofitting of the latest technology ‘H-Class’ parts of the turbines. The electricity generation efficiency is expected to improve by approximately 2%, with reduced emissions to air on a per MWh (megawatt-hour) basis. The Proposed Development involves no changes to any external infrastructure of the Power Station.

Local Planning Authority (LPA) consultation

Regulation 13 of the 2017 Regulations requires the Secretary of State to consult every LPA for the areas in which the Proposed Development will be carried out to seek its views as to whether an EIA should be undertaken in respect of the Proposed Development.

The Secretary of State consulted Thurrock Borough Council (the relevant LPA) by letter on 9 October 2023. The LPA responded on 30 October 2023 (ref. 23/01236/SCR). In its response, the LPA provides the outcomes of its Screening Assessment Process, which included a consideration of the Proposed Development against the criteria contained in Schedule 3 of the 2017 Regulations. The LPA confirmed its view that an EIA is not required for the Proposed Development as it is unlikely to have any significant environmental effects. With reference to mitigation, the LPA recommends that various assessments and mitigation plans would be required in any planning application to manage noise and air quality emissions arising from traffic generation during construction.

Screening Decision

The Secretary of State agrees that the Proposed Development does not represent Schedule 1 Development requiring a mandatory EIA as the Proposed Development would not increase the output by more than 300MW. The Secretary of State does consider that the Proposed Development represents Schedule 2 development requiring screening, as it is development to provide a change to a generating station where the generating station is already authorised and operational. Therefore, the Proposed Development could constitute EIA development if it is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

When considering the Applicant’s request for screening under regulation 10 of the 2017 Regulations, the Secretary of State has taken account of information as required under Regulation 15 of the 2017 Regulations, including the selection criteria in Schedule 3 and the views of the LPA. The Secretary of State concludes that the documents provided with the Applicant’s email of 28 September 2023 and the evidence supplied by the relevant LPA are sufficient and that she can conclude that the Proposed Development **is not EIA development** under these Regulations as it is unlikely to have any significant effects on the environment.

In coming to her decision, the Secretary of State particularly notes the following:

- there are no statutorily designated nature conservation sites within the limits of the Proposed Development. The nearest are Holehaven Creek Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 950m to the east, and Vange and Fobbing Marshes SSSI 1 km to the north;
- the nearest designated heritage asset is the World War II bombing decoy on Fobbing Marshes Scheduled Monument approximately 1.9km to the north west;
- the works area consists of existing hardstanding served by existing drainage systems and there would be no increase in the footprint of the Power Station;
- there will be no loss of vegetation or habitats resulting from the Proposed Development;
- the operational site access, traffic and operational personnel profiles, water and waste emissions do not differ to that of the existing Power Station;
- there is expected to be no changes to external noise emissions during operation of the Power Station and no requirement for any additional external lighting;
- the Proposed Development requires no external changes to any building, equipment, stack dimensions, elevations, footprints or locations;
- the Applicant stated that there is not expected to be any material change to the operational emissions from the Power Station, which must continue to be in compliance with the existing Environmental Permit (EP) administered by the Environment Agency (EA);
- the Secretary of State notes that the Applicant states that the Proposed Development would reduce emissions to air on a per MWh basis, but also that the maximum generation capacity would increase by approximately 77MW. Via email on 17 November 2023, Officials invited the Applicant to explain what it considered to be a material change in this context, and whether it considered a quantification of the change in the emissions profile of the operational Power Station in light of the Proposed Development would assist the Secretary of State in considering potential impacts on air quality. The Applicant responded on 20 November 2023, stating that the assessment of materiality with regard to air quality had been made based on the fact there would be no requirement to amend the existing EP as a result of the Proposed Development. The EP sets out hourly, daily, monthly and yearly limits for two monitoring points/locations on site and compliance with these existing limits will be maintained following the Proposed Development, therefore leading to the conclusion of no material change. The Applicant considered a material change to be one that would have necessitated the EP limits to change. The Applicant does not consider it necessary to provide any supporting quantitative assessment of this given the continued statement of compliance with the existing EP. The Applicant also noted that the approximate 77MW increase relates to maximum generation capacity only and the operating model of the Power Station as a peaking plant means this does not equate to an equivalent increase in total annual electricity output;
- the Secretary of State acknowledges the Applicant's assertion that the established EP limits will continue to be met although she notes that the

Applicant's assertion is not quantified in any way. Similarly, she recognises that the Power Station is a peaking plant and as such the approximate 77MW maximum increase in output does not equate to an equivalent increase in total annual output, although notes that this point is asserted with no quantification, for example, of how long the Power Station is likely to operate at the new maximum capacity and any quantification of the resultant emissions.

Nevertheless, despite the lack of quantification noted above, the Secretary of State sees no reason to lose confidence in the EP regime as administered by the EA, which would include the EA requiring additional mitigation/abatement in the event that ongoing monitoring were to show non-compliance with the existing EP emission limits. She also notes that the EA will be consulted on the subsequent Section 36 Change Application to be made by the Applicant for the Proposed Development. She is therefore satisfied that significant effects due to changes in air quality are unlikely;

- as there are no new likely significant effects associated with the Proposed Development, no cumulative interactions of impacts are expected;
- the LPA does not consider the Proposed Development to be EIA development; and
- in the event that any request to vary the Power Station consent is submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of State may require the Applicant and its contractors to implement relevant environmental management plans throughout the construction works associated with the Proposed Development, as recommended by the LPA.

This Screening Decision is provided without prejudice to the outcome of the Secretary of State's consideration and determination of any subsequent application that might be made to vary the Section 36 consent for the Power Station in respect of the Proposed Development.

A copy of this letter has been sent to Patricia Coyle at Thurrock Borough Council.

Yours faithfully,



John Wheadon

Head of Energy Infrastructure Planning Delivery
On behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero