

2 SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

2.1 Introduction

The scoping study forms part of the environmental assessment process and is undertaken in line with the Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 and the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended (referred to hereafter as the EIA Regulations).

The purpose of the scoping study is to carry out preliminary consultations at an early stage in the environmental assessment process, which should continue until completion and resolution of all environmental factors involved. The process should identify the key environmental issues through a thorough consultation exercise, which should encompass a broad range of statutory and non-statutory bodies.

2.2 EIA Screening

At the outset of the project, the applicant consulted informally with Planning NI (Craigavon Area Office), seeking advice and an informal opinion on the nature of development with regard to the EIA Regulations, and the range of statutory agencies likely to be consulted. In June 2011, Planning NI advised that an EIS would be required and outlined a number of key agencies to consult with in the preparation of the EIS.

The applicant also sought pre-planning advice in relation to the likely requirements for such a project, including obligations under the EIA Regulations and Habitats Directive, from Louth County Council. They advised the applicant informally that project would not meet the criteria for a Strategic Infrastructure Project, however an EIS and a Natura Impact Statement are likely to be required.

Following this, RPS (on behalf of Frazer Ferries Ltd) submitted a formal request for an EIA scoping opinion (or determination) from the competent authority in each jurisdiction, namely Louth County Council (LCC) in Dundalk, Ireland and the local Area Planning Office of the Department of the Environment (DOE) in Craigavon, Northern Ireland. This was undertaken in writing in October 2011; the relevant correspondence is included in Appendix 2.1 of this ES/EIS.

In summary, Planning NI determined under Regulation 7(1) (a) of The Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 that the proposed development constitutes EIA development.

Similarly, LCC has determined under Section 173(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and Schedule 7 to the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) that the proposed development constitutes EIA development.

2.3 EIA Scoping

Scoping is an early stage in the EIA process and is designed to ensure that the environmental studies provide all the relevant information on:

- the impacts of the project, in particular focusing on the most important impacts;
- the alternatives to the project;
- any other matters to be included.

Scoping is the process of determining the content and extent of the matters which should be covered in the environmental information to be submitted to a competent authority for projects which are subject to EIA.

The approach of the consultation process was to be as thorough as possible and to consult as widely as possible with both statutory and non-statutory organisations which may have an interest in the proposal or in the locality.

In reflection of the transboundary nature of the proposal, scoping letters were issued to bodies in both Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland (ROI). Sample copies of the scoping letter and all written responses received are provided in Appendix 2.2. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 outline those bodies (in Northern Ireland and ROI respectively) which were consulted.

Table 2.1: List of Consultees (Northern Ireland)

| Organisation |
|--|
| Department of Agriculture and Rural Development |
| Down District Council Environmental Health |
| Down District Council Clerk and Chief Executive |
| Campaign for the Protection of the Countryside NI |
| Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment Energy Branch |
| Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside |
| Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group |
| NIEA – Marine Licensing Water Management Unit |
| Fisheries Conservancy Board for Northern Ireland |
| Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety |
| Friends of the Earth Northern Ireland |
| DOE Planning, Craigavon Area Planning Office |
| RSPB – Northern Ireland |
| Ulster Archaeological Society |
| Ulster Society for the Protection of the Countryside |
| BSBI |
| HSC Public Health Agency |
| NIEA – Protecting Historic Monuments |
| Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure Inland Fisheries Division NIEA – Water Management Unit |
| Planning Service - Landscape Service |
| Ulster Wildlife Trust |
| NI Water |
| National Trust |
| Northern Ireland Utility Regulator |
| Northern Ireland Birdwatchers' Association |

| |
|--|
| NIEA – Land and Resource Management |
| Northern Ireland Tourist Board |
| NIEA – Natural Heritage |
| Roads Service Northern Ireland Southern Divisional Headquarters |
| NIEA – Protecting Historic Buildings |
| Wildfowl & Wetland Trust |
| Roads Service Northern Ireland Eastern Divisional Headquarters |

Table 2.2: List of Consultees (ROI)

| Organisation |
|---|
| The Arts Council |
| Fáilte Ireland |
| An Taisce |
| The Heritage Council |
| Development Applications Unit Dept of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht |
| National Parks & Wildlife Service |
| Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government Dept of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government |
| Inland Fisheries Ireland |
| Waterways Ireland |
| Environmental Protection Agency |
| Minister for the Dept of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources Dept of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources |
| Minister for the Dept of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine |
| BirdWatch Ireland |

The proposed development area encompasses lands both above and below the Low Water Mark (LWM), within the inter-tidal and sub-tidal areas. As the remit of DOE Planning NI is concerned primarily with proposals above the LWM, RPS consulted directly with DOE Marine Division under Regulation 13 of the Marine Works (EIA) Regulations 1997, seeking a scoping opinion from those bodies concerned with proposed development in this location, from a marine perspective.

An interim response was received from DOE Marine Division in February 2013, including comments from the consultees noted in Table 2.3 below. A sample copy of the scoping letter and the written response received is provided in Appendix 2.3

Table 2.3: List of Marine Works Consultees

| Organisation |
|--|
| Rivers Agency |
| Department of Culture Arts and Leisure |
| Maritime & Coastguard Agency |
| Centre for Maritime Archaeology |
| Commissioners of Irish Lights |
| Louth County Council |
| DOE Maritime Nature Conservation |
| Crown Estate |
| Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Fisheries |
| Agri-Food & Biosciences Institute (AFBI) |

The information received from these agencies has been informative and useful, and has supported and informed the findings of this EIA.

2.4 Community Consultation

In addition to the consultation exercise undertaken with statutory bodies, outlined above, Frazer Ferries Ltd. undertook consultation with several other non-statutory agencies and voluntary organisations within Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The issues and commentary noted was used to assist the preparation of the detailed design and the ES/EIS. This was supplemented by consultation with local landowners, residents, political representatives and selected stakeholders.

A full report of the consultation process is contained within Appendix 2.3 of this ES/EIS.

A summary of the consultation process is provided below.

2.4.1 Initiation

Frazer Ferries Ltd. appointed Stakeholder Communications in 2012 to assist with community consultation works in respect of the proposed development. The intention was establish the views of the local community in advance of submitting a planning application.

2.4.2 Consultation Methodology

2.4.2.1 Householder Survey

Stakeholder undertook an independent door-to-door survey amongst households in the Greencastle area between the dates of 24th – 28th April 2012. 56 households were engaged either by receiving a face to face call or a postal survey to complete; these 56 properties represented all of the households on the local electoral register.

The survey formally identified the opinions and positive attitudes of residents with regards to the proposals; the findings were used as the basis of additional engagement.

2.4.2.2 Consultation Meetings

Stakeholder and Frazer Ferries Ltd. undertook further engagement with local residents, through the Greencastle Area Residents Group (GARG), meetings with the committee and also engagement on a *one to one* basis with a number of residents.

A newsletter was issued to all residents who had responded to the householder survey; the newsletter contained information on the project progress and indicative drawings of the proposal.

In conjunction with GARG, a drop in event and public meeting was held in February 2013. The event was advertised in local and national press with invitations being issued to local political representatives. The event was attended by over 100 people.

Preliminary photomontages and designs were displayed in order to inform attendees of the proposals.

2.4.2.3 Political/Stakeholder Engagement

A number of political engagement meetings with local and national representatives at Councillor, Council official, MLA, MP and Ministerial level to discuss the project. A presentation was made to Newry and Mourne District Council in March 2013.

A meeting was also held with Northern Ireland Tourist Board to discuss the implications for tourism in respect of the proposal.

Please refer to Appendix 2.3 for a comprehensive overview of the consultation process undertaken by Frazer Ferries Ltd.