



HOW

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CASE STUDY

March 2009

King Street Gas Storage

Client: King Street Energy (Cheshire) Ltd.

Location: Northwich

For the past two years, HOW Planning has provided King Street Energy (KSE) (Cheshire) Ltd, with detailed planning advice on a complex underground gas storage facility and associated pipeline, located in Northwich, Cheshire. On behalf of KSE, HOW Planning submitted two planning applications to Cheshire County Council for the development; one relating to the gas storage and the other for twin cross country pipelines required for salt cavity creation to store the gas.

HOW Planning has acted as the lead consultant and taken responsibility for the compilation and submission of the two planning applications, including a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment for both aspects of this complex project.



Details

KSE propose to develop the King Street site in Northwich for the purposes of storing natural gas. This will reduce the reliance on imported natural gas and increase the UK's storage capacity, which significantly lags behind that of central Europe. As such, the King Street Gas Storage Project is of national importance as it ensures an adequate supply of gas to UK customers and decreases the risk of price volatility.

As part of this project, it is proposed to construct two parallel cross-country pipelines, each of about 600mm internal diameter and approximately 58km long, for transporting water from the Mersey Estuary at Bromborough, to King Street, and returning the saltwater produced from the solution mining process back to the Mersey Estuary. This will enable the development of ten underground salt cavities through the process of solution mining on the King Street site, and the construction of a gas processing facility for the storage of natural gas in the underground salt cavities.



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Each element of this project was subject to two separate planning applications due to the nature and complexity associated with each. The first application, which was submitted in October 2007 relates to the construction of the underground gas storage facility and associated infrastructure. The second, which was submitted in January 2008, relates to the construction of the twin parallel pipelines, between the site and Bromborough on the Mersey Estuary. A small element of the pipeline falls within Wirral and was the subject of a separate planning application.

HOW Planning acted as project co-ordinator for both elements of the project, which involved agreeing a project management approach with Cheshire County Council and Wirral Borough Council as the lead authorities. The outcome was a positive working relationship with both local Councils and statutory consultees.

Running in parallel with the above applications, HOW Planning also submitted an application to the Department of Energy and Climate Change, for Planning Construction Authorisation Consent (PCA) for the pipeline element of the project, in accordance with the Pipe-Lines Act 1962. In addition, due to the application involving the storage of natural gas, an application was also submitted to the Health and Safety Executive for Hazardous Substances Consent.

The pipeline that crosses within Wirral MBC's jurisdiction was granted planning approval in October 2008. However, both the applications were refused by Cheshire County Council at their Development and Regulatory Committee in December 2008. These refusals have been appealed and recovered by the Secretary of State and are due to be heard at a public inquiry. HOW Planning have been retained by KSE to project manage the appeal process and act as an expert witness on the planning element of this complex appeal.