

Planning Act 2008: Development Consent Order Fact Sheet

Q. What is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

A: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (“NSIPs”) are major infrastructure developments in [England and Wales](#). These include projects such as power plants, large renewable energy projects, new airports, airport extensions and major road projects.

Q. Who decides a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

A: A Development Consent Order (“DCO”) application for consent to undertake a NSIP is made to the Planning Inspectorate who will consider the application and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will decide on whether development consent should be granted for the proposed scheme.

Q. How does the NSIP process work?

A. The NSIP process comprises six key stages, covering pre-application, acceptance, pre-examination, examination, decision and post-decision stages. Upon receipt of an application for development consent, the Planning Inspectorate has 28 days to decide whether or not to accept it. There is a period of 6 months for the Planning Inspectorate to examine an application and 3 months for the Planning Inspectorate to make its recommendation to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has a further period of 3 months in which to issue a decision. From accepting an application to making a decision, the whole process should last in the region of 15 months. Previously, the average time taken for major applications was around 2 years.

Q. How do local authorities work together if a NSIP covers a number of local authorities?

A. The Planning Inspectorate encourages dialogue between local authorities affected by a NSIP. Ultimately, it is for the particular local authority to judge how best to respond to the Planning Inspectorate when notified of a NSIP. However, if several local authorities are affected by a proposal, they may wish to discuss and co-ordinate representations, if this is the clearest and most effective means of conveying their views.