Purpose of the project:
Valero Energy Ltd (Valero) is developing a combined heat and power (CHP) or cogeneration plant to supplement their existing refinery’s electrical power and steam demands. The Project will generate electricity whilst using the waste heat from gas combustion to produce superheated steam for use within the refinery. The use of waste heat (and the production of steam) increases the overall efficiency of the electrical generation plant.

Description of the project:
The Project comprises a ‘simple cycle’ cogeneration (steam and electricity) facility, producing up to 49.9 megawatts of electricity from the combustion of natural gas in a turbine generator. The Project will also produce superheated steam via a heat recovery steam generator. All of these elements of the Project are within the land ownership of Valero’s Pembrokeshire refinery. The Refinery is set in a rural location, close to Milford Haven Estuary and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

Key Issues:
Three key issues influenced the planning of the Project:

- The Project was the first successful Development of National Significance (DNS) application under the Planning (Wales) Act 2015; an untested process for both operator and regulators.
Residential receptors close by. An assessment of operational noise was carried out according to British Standard 4142:2014.

Challenging programme for environmental permit and planning approvals.

**Lessons Learnt:**
Based on previous experience with multi-regulator, multi-permit applications, ERM proposed regular engagement with the regulatory bodies through all-party meetings. This was found to be key to a ‘right first time’ application which was required by the challenging programme. Regular meetings enabled:

- inter-regulator discussion of common issues;
- correct adherence to process;
- mutual efficiency;
- identification of resource constraints; as well as
- discussion of regulator feedback and proposed actions.

This process of engagement led to a common understanding of the significance of the predicted noise in the local context, before the application was submitted.

A cost benefit analysis of noise abatement and mitigation measures was carried out, as well as a detailed assessment of the noise context of the receptors, resulting in a bespoke package of noise abatement which was both technically feasible and effective in reducing anticipated noise levels.

The resulting mitigated predicted noise levels were deemed not significant in context and the DNS application was approved ahead of the project schedule, through the Written Representations route, avoiding the need for a Hearing or Inquiry.

The Planning Inspectorate is now recommending this multi-regulator engagement approach as best practice for similar developments.

**Contact Details:**

Jamie Hogg  
Acoustic Consultant  
ERM  
E [Jamie.hogg@erm.com](mailto:Jamie.hogg@erm.com) | W [www.erm.com](http://www.erm.com)

For access to more EIA case studies and hundreds of non-technical summaries of Environmental Statements visit: [https://www.iema.net/eia-quality-mark/eia-quality-mark-case-studies](https://www.iema.net/eia-quality-mark/eia-quality-mark-case-studies)