



Meeting note

Project name	Cleve Hill Solar Park
File reference	EN010085
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	26 March 2018
Meeting with	Cleve Hill Solar Park
Venue	Telecon
Attendees	The Planning Inspectorate Tracey Williams (Case Manager) Karl-Jonas Johansson (Case Officer) Emma Cottam (EIA and Land Rights Advisor) Karen Wilkinson (EIA and Land Rights Advisor) The Applicant Hugh Brennan – Cleve Hill Solar Park Emily Marshall – Counter Context Peter Cole – Pinsent Masons Mike Bird – Arcus Consultancy Services
Meeting objectives	Project update meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which Applicants (or others) could rely.

Non-Statutory consultation update

The Applicant gave an update on the outcomes from various meetings it had conducted since the last meeting. The meetings with the residents closest to the site (which presented specific mitigation proposals for the affected properties) were well received. The residents were appreciative that their concerns regarding the panels on the south-eastern section of the site (which have now been removed from the project design) had been taken on board.

The Applicant has also met with representatives from various local groups including the Faversham Society, Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), Swale Green Party, Graveney Rural Environment Action Team (GREAT) and the Campaign to Protect Rural England to seek their views on the project. GREAT was noted to be opposed to the Proposed Development and the Applicant is continuing dialogue with this group. Some issues raised at these meetings relate include community benefits and enhanced rights of way.

As the application site is located on agricultural land, the Applicant was advised to consider the need to undertake consultation with the National Farmers Union.

Swale Borough Council (SBC), Kent County Council (KCC) and Canterbury City Council (CCC) have agreed to hold monthly meetings with the Applicant. The next meeting is scheduled for early April.

The Applicant is having regular dialogue with Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and Historic England (HE) and technical specialists in the relevant Local Authorities. The Applicant is also continuing to engage with the local MPs.

Noting that interest in the Proposed Development had been very low at the non-statutory consultation event held on the Isle of Sheppey, the Applicant is reconsidering the location of this event for the purposes of its statutory consultation.

The Applicant was advised to detail all non-statutory and statutory consultation in the consultation report.

Flooding

The Applicant confirmed that the EA was now content with how flood risk has been addressed in the project design. The earth bund intended to protect the critical infrastructure (within the substation and battery storage compound) on the site will be 5.3m AOD in total (approximately 3-4m above existing ground level). The Applicant has now commissioned ground investigation surveys (including boreholes and trial pits) and is awaiting the results. This will inform whether soil excavated from the application site can be used for the earth bund and confirm that the ground can support the substation and battery storage unit.

Project Programme

The Applicant advised that the section 42 consultation is now likely to commence in May 2018 (rather than in late April 2018). Submission of the DCO application is likely to be in August 2018. The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it will provide an update to the project programme and anticipated submission date in mid-April, once it has had the results of the ground survey back.

Surveys

The Applicant is updating the viewpoints for the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, to include consideration of winter views and additional viewpoints suggested by CCC. The Applicant noted that draft guidance for residential visual amenity assessment has recently been published by the Landscape Institute and will consider this guidance when undertaking its assessment.

The phase one habitat surveys have been updated and the Applicant is also in the process of updating its great crested newt surveys. The Applicant is continuing discussions with the Habitat Management Steering Group (NE, KWT and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) regarding mitigation measures, how to best improve biodiversity on the site and the overarching Biodiversity and Landscape Management Plan. The ornithological surveys are due to be completed by the end of April 2018.

A study into the likely micro climate beneath the panels and the ability to graze sheep amongst the panels is ongoing. It was noted that an east-west alignment for the panels is proposed.

Hydrological surveys have been undertaken to inform the drainage strategy, which have confirmed that sustainable drainage systems are unlikely to be suitable for the site. The Applicant has been undertaking a watching brief on archaeological trial pits and has updated its cultural heritage desk-based assessment accordingly. It was noted that the decision to remove panels from the south-eastern section of the site was partly influenced by the potential impacts to cultural heritage assets.

Protective provisions

The Applicant will progress the protective provisions when the relevant stakeholders have received the updated design parameters for the project.

Draft documents review

The Applicant confirmed that it would like to utilise the service but clarified that this will depend on the finalised project programme. The Inspectorate explained that it could do a targeted review of draft documents (focused on specific/novel issues) if the Applicant requested. It was agreed that the Applicant would notify the Inspectorate in advance if draft documents are to be submitted for review.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- Applicant to provide an update to the project programme and anticipated submission date.
- Applicant to send the Inspectorate its local authority contact details.
- Next meeting to be arranged for end of April 2018.