



Preliminary Meeting Note

Application: Little Crow Solar Park
Reference: EN010101
Time and date: 10 am, Tuesday 20 April 2021
Venue: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

This meeting note is not a full transcript of the Preliminary Meeting. It is a summary of the key points discussed.

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/yorkshire-and-the-humber/little-crow-solar-park/?ipcsection=overview>

1. Welcome and Introduction

Grahame Gould (GG), welcomed those present and introduced himself as the single appointed person as the Examining Authority to examine the Little Crow Solar Park application.

GG explained the appointment was made by delegation from the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on 7 January 2021.

GG explained that he would be examining the application made by INGR Solar (Little Crow) Limited ('the Applicant') before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will decide whether an Order granting Development Consent for the proposed project, which is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), should be made.

GG introduced the representatives present for the Applicant, North Lincolnshire Council and the occupiers and owners of Heron Lodge.

GG explained the purpose of the Preliminary Meeting (PM) and noted that the Examination would commence after the PM closed.

GG confirmed that all documents and submissions received and accepted during the Examination would be published on the [project-specific page](#) of the National Infrastructure Planning website.

2. Audio recording

The full audio recording of this PM is available on the National Infrastructure Planning website and can be accessed [here](#).

3. General Data Protection Regulation

GG explained the Planning Inspectorate's duties under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Further info relating to the GDPR can be found in the Planning Inspectorate's [Privacy Note](#).

4. Examination Process

GG briefly explained the examination process under the Planning Act 2008 (PA2008). Further information can be found in the [Advice Note 8.4](#)

GG explained that due to current COVID-19 restrictions in place, it is likely that any further hearings held as part of the Examination will be virtual. GG explained that the holding of physical events may become possible later on in the examination, but that would be dependent on the Government's COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines applicable at the relevant time.

Further information relating to hearings and site inspections can be found in our [Advice Note 8.5](#)

5. Initial Assessment of Principal Issues

The ExA explained the purpose of the Initial Assessment of Principal Issues (section 88 of the PA2008), which can be found in [Annex C](#) of the Rule 6 Letter of 23 March 2021 and asked for any observations on them.

Vivienne Sedgley (VS) on behalf of the owners and occupiers of Heron Lodge asked for clarification on which heading the diversion of the footpath would come under. GG advised that this was likely to be either Amenities or Landscape.

6. Examination Timetable – general matters

The GG noted the requests, already received in writing to amend the draft Examination Timetable contained in [Annex D](#) of Rule 6 letter and also welcomed further suggestions from the parties in attendance.

The ExA confirmed that the Rule 8 Letter containing the finalised Examination timetable would be issued in the week following the close of the PM, and that its content would be informed by discussions held during the PM. The ExA confirmed that its first round of written questions would be issued at the same time as the Rule 8 letter.

The ExA requested that North Lincolnshire Council, in submitting its Local Impact Report (LIR) at Deadline 2 (24 May 2021), should ensure that copies of all of the Local Development Plan policies (policy wording and explanatory text), considered to be important and relevant, are appended to the LIR.

GG explained that he was considering making the following changes to the draft Timetable:

- 1) The timing of the ExA's issuing of notifications for the holding of future hearings to accommodate the notice periods placed upon the Applicant by

the Scunthorpe Telegraph for the placing of advertisements in that newspaper.

- 2) Incorporating the ability for the Applicant to submit Statements of Commonality at Deadlines 1 and 2, so that there is consistency between the ExA's Procedural Decision 2 in Annex F of the Rule 6 letter [PD-004] and what is stated in the Examination Timetable.
- 3) The inclusion at Deadlines 4 to 8 inclusive of the opportunity for comments to be made on submissions that may have been made at the preceding deadline.
- 4) Further to the ExA's publication of its Schedule of Changes to the draft Development Consent Order (if required), the inclusion at Deadline 7 of the opportunity for the Applicant to respond to the Schedule of Changes.

Allied to the first of the above listed matters, the Applicant suggested GG could consider changing the proposed September hearing dates from 7/8th September to 9/10 September, which would allow for the Deadline 5 submissions to be considered in the determination of whether the September hearings would need to be held, while allowing for the ExA's notification for any such hearings to be issued on 16 August. GG advised that the Case Team would establish whether changing the dates for any September hearings for the Little Crow Examination would cause any resourcing conflicts with any other hearings or inquiries that the Inspectorate might be hosting on 8 and 9 September. Following that internal check being undertaken GG would make a decision about changing either the hearing notification date or sitting days for any hearings that might be required in September.

Reserve dates for hearings are available for Open Floor Hearings (OFH), if requested, and further Issue Specific Hearings if required at the discretion of the ExA. Requests for an OFH must be submitted by Deadline 1 Monday 10 May. The ExA stressed that the purpose of an OFH is not to reiterate any submissions made in writing, which should all be comprehensive.

VS confirmed that her clients would like the opportunity to attend and participate at one hearing, rather than at multiple hearings throughout the Examination, and that they might limit themselves to one representation submitted in writing or made orally at an OFH.

VS raised the issue of the provision of information to the Interested Parties and that her clients had encountered difficulties in accessing the all of the application documents, as highlighted in their Relevant Representations. GG advised that the application documents had since been compiled into the Examination Library published on the project webpage which listed the application documents in order, which should assist all Interested Parties in locating specific application documents. GG advised that it was good practice for all Interested Parties to use the Examination Library to access documents, and to use the Examination Library reference numbers when making their written submissions.

The ExA proposed that the Examination closing date as stated in the draft Examination Timetable set out in the Rule 6 Letter of 23 March 2021 (20 October 2021) might require amending to 21 October 2021 in accordance with 98(1) and

98(2) of the Planning Act 2008. It was agreed that the closing date would be confirmed by the ExA in the finalised Timetable after further consideration by GG.

GG requested that all deadline submissions should be made via the 'Make a Submission' tab on the Little Crow Solar Park project webpage on the National Infrastructure website as opposed to via the project mailbox which had been used previously for deadline submissions.

7. Hearings and Site Inspections

GG stated that in the event that the position with respect to COVID-19 changes and physical hearings being permitted, the Applicant would be notified as early as possible so that it had sufficient time to arrange a suitable location.

With respect to site inspections, GG explained that because of the situation with COVID-19 it might not be possible for him to hold an Accompanied Site Inspection (ASI) prior to the close of the Examination. Accordingly, as an alternative to an ASI a hybrid Access Required Site Inspection (ARSI) might need to be used. For an ARSI the owners and occupiers of the land to be inspected would grant GG permission to enter their land to view it, but without being fully accompanied by owners, occupiers or their representatives.

GG reminded the parties present at the PM that they should provide suggested locations at Deadline 1 (10 May 2021) for the ExA to view when it undertakes site inspections during the course of the Examination. The availability of those submissions will inform the choice of inspection procedure or procedures used.

On 6th April, ExA undertook an Unaccompanied Site Inspection (USI), the [note](#) for which is available on the project webpage.

8. Procedural decisions

The ExA clarified the procedural decisions made under section 89(3) of the PA2008 as set out in Annex F of the Rule 6 Letter and the Procedural Decision issued on 13 April 2021 under s89(3) of the PA2008 [PD-005], and asked for any observations.

No comments were made by any of the Interested Parties in respect of the Procedural Decisions made by the ExA in advance of the PM.

9. Close of the PM

GG thanked everyone for their attendance and engagement and closed the PM at 12.39 hours.