

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Sunnica Energy Farm](#)
Subject: Sunnica Ltd New Timetable response. FAO Sunnica ExA
Date: 18 May 2022 17:52:48

Dear Examining Authority,

Ref: Sunnica Ltd New Timetable. Thoughts of Dr Catherine Judkins (Interested Party no. 20031441)

Many thanks for inviting comments from Interested Parties and others regarding Sunnica Ltd.'s recent request for a delay to proceedings and their suggested revised timetable.

During this entire process so far, Sunnica have failed to effectively engage with communities, consultees and with those who are set to be directly impacted by this scheme through CPO or through impact on their homes/business etc. This has been brought to Sunnica's attention on multiple occasions by local residents, the 4 x host authorities, MPs, parish councils, etc.

As a result of this lack of engagement, the DCO application is below standard, and the scheme is not yet at a stage where it can realistically be considered viable. There are too many unknowns, there is too much information missing from the DCO documentation hence Interested Parties, Affected Persons and other stakeholders are finding it difficult to properly assess the impact that this scheme would have. This application should not be allowed to progress further until these matters are resolved and, in particular, until there is a deliverable grid connection agreement which is vital for the scheme to operate.

Section A - Justification

I do not agree with the justification for this revised timetable request because:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->1) This latest delay request is a direct result of the scheme being incomplete at the time of submission to the planning inspectorate.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->2) It is not the first delay we have experienced. We were expecting the application to be submitted to the planning inspectorate in summer 2020; this was moved to spring 2021 (in which case the Examination would have already been completed and we would likely be close to knowing the outcome). Eventually the [incomplete] application was submitted over 6 months later than expected (winter 2021) and we are now being asked to wait a further 2 months or more for the examination to begin, and for this to now be held at a time that significantly prejudices registered parties. The applicant has had over 3 years to put together a detailed and fully evaluated application. They have not achieved this.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->3) It is clear from the relevant representations submitted by National Grid and others along the cable route (e.g. LGC group, Network Rail, etc) that there has been a notable lack of engagement with them. Having been led to believe throughout the consultation that Sunnica had secured a Grid connection and that Option 1 was the most likely extension location it is rather surprising at this late hour to learn that this had not actually been fully agreed, resulting in an energy development that at this moment would not be able to provide energy to the Grid.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->4) Amongst Sunnica's justification comments in their letter dated 28th April 2022 they state that, "*It should be noted that Sunnica did not see National Grid's relevant representation until the Inspectorate published them on 6 April 2022*" (paragraph 3.15.3). However, in a previous paragraph (1.3) they admit to being first made aware of this issue on 10th March 2022. But it seems they didn't act on it at that time, and so themselves have added to the delay. In fact, they waited almost 2 more weeks from publication of the representations to request the delay (letter dated 19th April). It seems very unfair that Sunnica can unnecessarily add further delays into proceedings by not reacting quickly, and then use their self-inflicted delay to push the timetable back to a date that suits them and prejudices registered parties (see later comments on the unsuitability of the timetable).

<!--[if !supportLists]-->5) I do not consider this scheme to be 'near-term' or 'shovel ready' or anything close to coming to fruition. Rather than keep requesting additional delays, the applicant should withdraw the proposal until such time that it has been fully evaluated and until there is confidence that the scheme can be properly examined and, ultimately, delivered.

Section B - Confusion

I, and others, am confused about what they are actually proposing, and I feel that this also needs clarification before the application can proceed any further. For example:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->6) In the Scoping Report of March 2019 it was proposed to build the Grid

extension to the west of the Burwell Grid. This was re-iterated in the June/July 2019 non statutory consultation. In the autumn 2020 Statutory Consultation, 3 options were suggested for the location of the Grid extension; the original one to the west (referred to as Option 3), one to the north-east (Option 2) and one inside the existing Grid compound (Option 1). Despite being later additions to the proposal, only Options 1 and 2 were taken forward to the DCO application. No reason was given as to why the originally proposed Option 3 was eliminated. In their letter dated 28 April 2022 (para 1.6) Sunnica state that they had considered Option 3 previously. But which Option 3 was this? The original Option 3, or the 'new' Option 3 that they are now suggesting? They imply that this was considered and disregarded but now may be feasible after all. But is this the 'new' Option 3 or the previous one? Why do they now consider the 'new' Option 3 feasible?

7) It seems that Sunnica is suggesting modification of their already proposed onsite substation on the West A site to accommodate the Grid extension. It is not clear where this would be located, nor how it would look. It is not clear why they are focussing on the substation at West A and what works would be needed at the other already proposed substations at the East A and East B sites. This all needs confirming to enable assessments of the impacts.

Section C - Biased timetable as proposed by Sunnica

If Sunnica do not withdraw their application, then a suitable and longer delay should be put in place to ensure that a full assessment of the alternatives can be carried out and to clarify what the revised plans would actually entail. I do not agree with starting proceedings sooner, while the Grid extension remains unclear, and while knowing that the DCO application is subject to a significant change. I see this as unfair to me and other registered parties and it would prejudice our ability to participate in the process. If a suitable delay is not put in place, any representations made would be based on an inaccurate and incomplete scheme design. I would then need to review, change and resubmit my representations while the examination is underway, at short notice, which would be unfair and would reduce my ability to respond effectively. Looking at other NSIP examinations it seems that the deadlines are rather tight, so this scenario would significantly limit participation of registered parties.

Regarding Sunnica's suggested timetable, I believe this would prejudice local communities and registered parties, for the following reasons.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->8) Sunnica's suggested delay to mid-July would not appear to provide sufficient time to fully evaluate the grid options, obtain a new agreement with National Grid, assess the impacts, carry out a full consultation, and then have regard to the consultation plus inclusion of any further changes that are likely to result from all this activity. It is highly unlikely that this can be achieved before 18th July. What is more, much of this requires input from National Grid and we don't know if they have the resource, or agreement, to work at such pace to assess this new alternative Grid extension. There is likely to be further delay.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->9) Despite being dismissed by Sunnica (who "*do not expect there to be any adverse effects on the environment beyond those identified in the Application already*") but then later admit that "*This is subject to confirmation*") I feel sure there will be significant environmental impacts from this new Grid extension option in West A. Beside the obvious visual and landscape impacts, there will need to be assessment of how this will be constructed, the noise impacts, impacts on wildlife, heritage etc. Carrying out all of these impact assessments will take time and it is unlikely they would be complete by the end of May in time to start a full consultation throughout June. Any consultation that proceeded without full environmental assessments having been completed would prejudice participants.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->10) Requesting that the Preliminary Meeting is held on or around 18th July, at the beginning of school holidays, is biased in favour of Sunnica. I have 2 primary school children to look after in the holidays and it would be highly unlikely that I would be able to attend the preliminary meeting with them in tow. I had anticipated this would take place in May. I know of a number of other school parents who are also registered as interested parties who would also struggle to find childcare to attend a preliminary meeting in the school holidays.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->11) In addition, having the examination start during the school holiday period would also severely limit my ability to review the newly revised DCO application documentation and respond effectively, especially to the tight deadlines during the examination process. I feel that such prejudice, which has only come about because Sunnica submitted an incomplete application (and have themselves created further unnecessary delay for not acting swiftly on the Grid extension problem), is unacceptable. It precludes registered parties from fully engaging and participating.

<!--[if !supportLists]-->12) I also have prebooked holiday plans in July and August, which I have had to postpone to this year due to previous covid restrictions. I am unable to move this again without incurring additional cost. If the examination started during the peak holiday season, as requested by Sunnica, I would be unable to effectively and fully take part. I know that other registered parties would be in a similar position.

Please do not allow Sunnica to dictate a timetable that favours them, and prejudices registered parties. Please ensure that the examination takes place only when a fully evaluated, technically feasible and deliverable scheme is available.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Catherine Judkins